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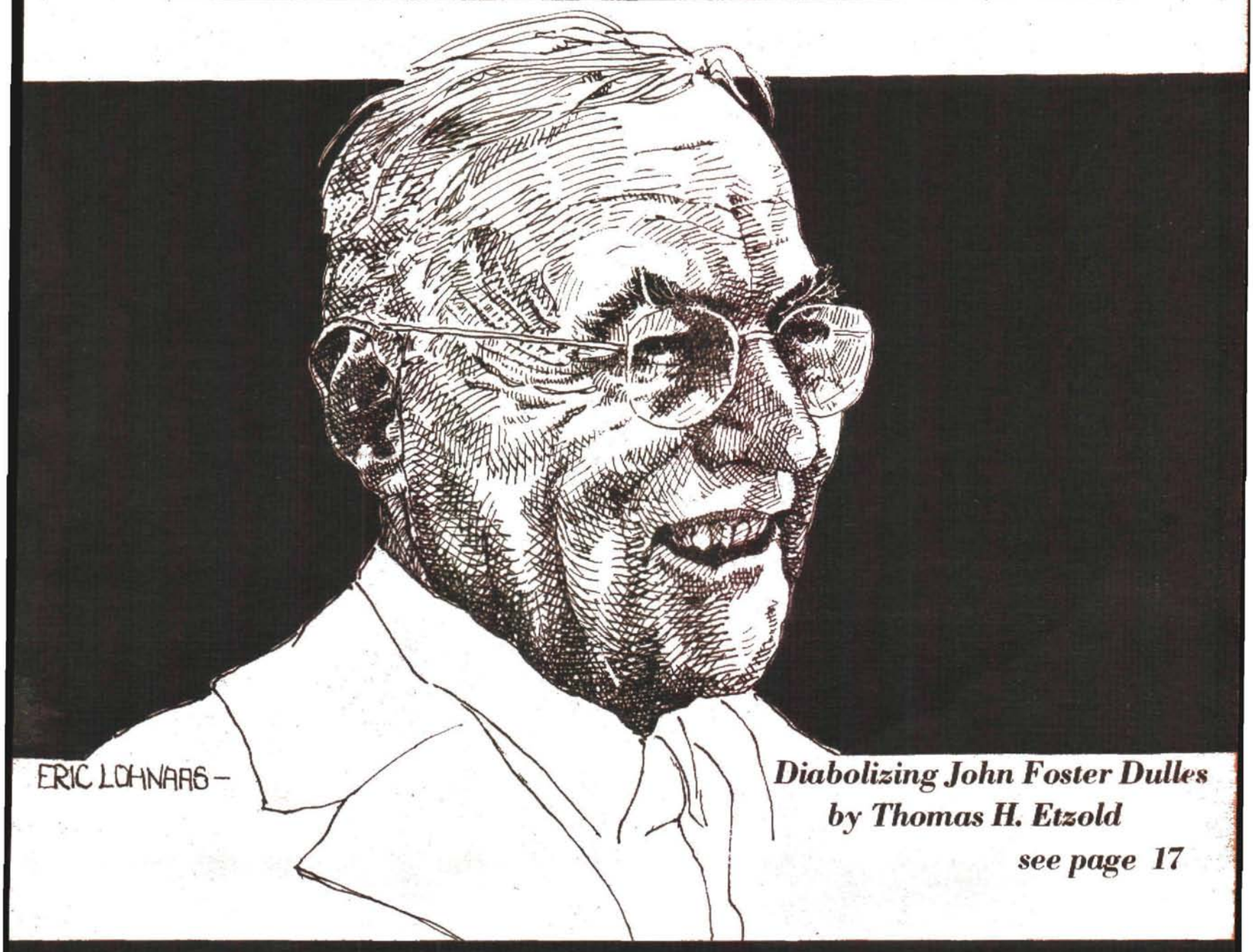

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by Thomas H. Etzold
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Rawls and Redistribution
by Marc F. Plattner

Necroliberation: A Theory of Justice
by Paul P. Somers, Jr.

Streaking: A Revisionist View by Stephen R. Maloney

The Great American Saloon Series by James Grant

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☆The Continuing Crisis☆

MARCH, and that peculiarly acquired American appetite for apocalypse—an appetite already whetted by Vietnam, student demonstrations, poverty crusades, assassinations, inflation, and Lyndon's exit—beheld its most extravagant feast yet—the impeachment of a president. It is a constitutional anomaly not visited upon these shores since the Hon. Ben Butler and his illustrious band attempted to lay low the fiend Johnson back in 18 and 68. Whether Mr. Nixon's international humiliation will satisfy the palates of America's connoisseurs of crisis is dubious, for there will remain poverty, starvation, racism, sexism, rampant injustice, and the melting of the polar cap over which to agonize. Nevertheless Senator James L. Buckley chose to eliminate one of the apocalyptists' sources of anxiety when on March 19 he asked the President to resign in an act "at once serving the greater interests of the nation, the institution of the Presidency, and the stated goals for which he so successfully campaigned."

■ Earlier in the month Representative Wilbur D. Mills predicted Mr. Nixon's resignation would come once a full congressional committee report on his taxes became public. Whatever the import of these arcane predictions, Representative Peter Rodino's House Judiciary Committee is tuning-up its whistles and bells for impeachment—and let us not forget that particular committee boasts such virtuosi as Jerome R. Waldie, John Conyers, Jr., Charles Rangel, Elizabeth Holtzman, and the Rev. Robert F. Drinan, a man rumored to be the Holy Ghost's personal Washington lobbyist!

■ The citizenry has an intrepid *Newsweek* reporter to thank for exposing yet another chilling raid on the federal treasury. On March 18 that public-spirited journal courageously revealed that Mr. Spiro T. Agnew is actually bilking the country of $44 per month, for he has quietly received permission to park his car in a government garage while he classifies his vice-presidential papers. Will perfidy never cease? And in New York, Senator James L. Buckley revved up the forces of repression when creative young journalists at City College had a little harmless fun in their irrepressible student newspaper. Their elegantly witty depiction of a nun masturbating with a crucifix not only elicited howls from that city's philistines but also a terrifying riposte from the college president. Further indications that America is slipping back into an era of puritanism were spotted by sharp-eyed civil libertarians in White Plains where twenty-eight year-old Brian Fielding, a talented football coach in the Pop Warner League whose fondness for children has touched many young hearts, was indicted on fifty-two counts of sexual abuse and sodomy. Intolerance of unorthodox lifestyles has spread to Chicago where police not only arrested forty-nine-year-old Robert Boyer for maintaining a torture chamber, a model electric chair, a five-foot square cage, a dungeon-type cell, and a collection of 500,000 pornographic pictures of some one hundred children between the ages of five and eighteen years, but they now are actually searching out the young actors in Mr. Boyer's advanced skits! Finally from Ronald Reagan's California comes the rumor that several chapters of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have complained about the possible abuse of dogs, horses, reptiles, and other household pets in pornographic movies featuring Linda Lovelace and Georgina Spliven.

■ Indiana University was the scene of another attempt to make higher education relevant. To students in J610, Mass Media and Mass Culture, Mr. E.W. Johnson, a new journalist who co-edited *The New Journalism* with Mr. Tom Wolfe, delivered an informative, if controversial, lecture in which he mentioned that it was he who killed John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Charles DeGaulle. Chastising students for their concern "with petty problems," he reminded them that he "had been concerned with space wars" and hurled a handsomely crafted ax at the head of a nearby student. Uncomprehending authorities later took Mr. Johnson into custody. And in that same great state, administrators at Indiana State University dismissed mathematics teacher Max W. Lynch for insisting on reading the Bible in his classroom. Neither the ACLU nor the AAUP has yet to take action, but on the campus, tension can be perceived.

■ In Atlanta, Grant Park Zoo officials divulged that Fred, a pygmy rattlesnake, died of his own poison when he bit himself on the lip while downing a mouse. Back in Washington Mr. Nixon applied himself to his presidential duties even as seven of his erstwhile advisors were arraigned, in the words of *Newsweek*, "like common criminals"—a striking simile coming from a newsweekly that only recently has shown such disrelish for criminals.

■ Harold Wilson became Prime Minister of England for the second time, and thousands of young adventurers began running around naked all over the world. One fellow did it aboard a Boeing 747 headed for London; 600 did it in Columbia, Missouri; 1,000 did it at the University of Georgia; and at the University of Colorado, 1,200 ecdysiasts raced and wheezed across campus. The phenomenon came to be called streaking and can be distinguished from the bawdy vagaries of your run-of-the-mill mental defective in that a) the subject usually is enrolled in an institution of higher learning, and b) he moves rapidly through a public place, he does not dawdle, leer, or fondle himself. At this writing streaking has occurred in Japan, South Korea, France, and Canada. But it has been introduced in its most advanced manifestation at the University of Georgia where five streakers parachuted from a Cessna 182. By the middle of the month it appeared that the phenomenon had spread to Rio de Janeiro when twenty-two buck-naked passengers stepped from a bus into the arms of the local constabulary. But what had, on the face of it, appeared to be Latin America's first mass streak was actually just another bit of revolutionary politicking. The naked bus riders had been robbed.

■ It appears that in Washington it is "dirty tricks" as usual, for a cruel hoax has been perpetrated on high school bands across the country. Sergeant William F. McGill of Washington's Metropolitan Police Department reports that some as yet unknown scoundrels sent out lavish invitations and brochures inviting thousands of high school bands to compete in a bogus "President's All-American Festival of Champions" May 15–18. No one knows how many of the youngsters were invited or how many still intend to participate, but many Republicans are popping mad. The Ervin Committee could be back in business again any day.

■ An attempt was made on the person of Princess Anne, and in Barcelona, Spain, a nineteen-year-old Danish sailor, attempting to "defend myself from the many monsters surrounding me," beheaded fifteen models in a waxworks museum while brandishing a sword and wearing a crown. The unfortunate youth was booked for public intoxication.

■ Kidnapping increased across the country as did the woes of the Randolph Hearst family. During the month tape recordings of Ms. Patricia Hearst indicated continued obduracy on the part of the Symbionese Liberation Army, a small California-based social justice organization. The Hearst food give-away ran into difficulties when some of the thousands of starving Californians balked at the quality of the viands, and a Hearst truck carrying some sixty thousand dollars of food was hijacked only a few miles from its distribution site. No complaint was registered with the police. Meanwhile there were at least four other kidnappings throughout the country, not including the singular misfortune of Mr. Jake Lauderdale of Dallas, Texas, who paid $3,000 ransom for the release of his wife, Lillie Wilma, only to discover that she had never been kidnapped at all. While two men trepanned him for the ransom by telling him his wife was in their possession, Mrs. Lauderdale was actually shopping for gloves and a hat to wear while gardening. And, down in Atlanta, on runs the sad saga of Mr. William A.H. Williams, patriot. Charged with the abduction of Mr. Reginald Murphy (a "notorious pointy-head"), Mr. Williams now languishes as a political prisoner in a Georgia hoosegow bereft of the faintest hope for competent counsel or reasonable bail. Now he has been forced to make a public appeal for funds. In a truly affecting public statement the idealistic Mr. Williams reminds his fellow Americans that such figures as Angela Davis and the Black Panthers have been aided by public contributions from "fat cat liberals," and he begs for support in his defense. Checks may be sent to the "W.A.H. Williams Emergency Defense Fund," in care of President Kingman Brewster, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, and you may tell Mr. Brewster that you learned of his patriotic and generous gesture in these pages. Mr. Williams' hopes for just treatment rest in his hands. □

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edited by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

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The Alternative *was founded in 1924 by George Nathan and Truman Newberry over a cheap domestic beer in McSorley's Old Ale House. Originally published on restroom walls, only since 1967 has it come under purview of the Saturday Evening Club which publishes it monthly October through June. One year subscriptions (nine issues) cost $6.00, and all correspondence (manuscripts, subscriptions, threatening letters, etc.) should be sent to* The Alternative, *c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.*

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Editorial

Two Jacks and a Joker

Bob Dylan, Metaphysician

THEY SAY ABOUT Mr. Bob Dylan's lyrics that they are filigreed with "metaphysical subtleties" and "surrealistic epigrams." They have embalmed him as the "conscience" and "oracle" of the sixties. His concerts are habituated by such American originals as a "budding" seventeen-year-old painter escorted by a father who, when not patronizing the arts, serves society as an advertising executive, a twenty-eight-year-old part-time builder of geodesic domes, a twenty-three-year-old part-time teacher at not one but two Montessori schools who also instructs aesthetes at Chicago's Art Institute, a vegetarian from the Department of Transportation, and herds of entranced young journalists representing the prepotent voices of American media. In short and in sum, Mr. Dylan performs for intellectualoids.

Their prodigious estimates of him are amusingly instructive and bound to transport you from *hee* to *haw* and back again. The begetter of domes judges that "he's not a god, more like a genius." The seventeen-year-old future van Gogh is more specific: "He's the most important musician who ever lived—more important than Ludwig van Beethoven." And the pedagogue, ah he is most memorable of all, he is a masterpiece of modernity, and he must be quoted without editorial redactions: "I've been listening to Dylan since 1966. I've been really heavily into him for about the last five years. *Nashville Skyline* [one of Dylan's country albums] is okay, but it's not the Dylan I needed when I listened to him back then. I mean, I was going through some personal changes, and his crazy imagery was a good escape for me." Finally, there are those eager young journalists. The entire herd of them simply gave themselves over to nitwit maunderings that displayed the kind of seasoned skepticism one might expect from a rosy-cheeked milkmaid of Bucolia or from a pious sister of the Church. They wasted countless forests of pulp in a journalistic potlatch so prodigal with superlatives and arcane gibberish that even Mr. Dylan must have blushed.

Well, are they right about Mr. Dylan? Frankly, I have some doubts. Admittedly he shares Beethoven's manners, but does he have Beethoven's famed humility and probity? His public utterances suggest that he does, but then there is the matter of his art. Does *The Times They Are A-Changin'* really match the complexity of the *Great Fugue*? I shake my head but perhaps complexity is not the soul of the issue and perhaps we would have a more fruitful line of inquiry were we to ask whether or not these two compositions share the same timeless beauty. Will the part-time builders of geodesic domes in the year 2074 find Mr. Dylan's work as lovely as they do today? Dubiety steals upon me, so for the nonce let us leave these ponderosities to our friend, the "budding" painter, and behold the master himself. Bob Dylan—troubadour, metaphysician, and millionaire.

The most eloquent evidence of his intellect resides in a remarkable statement he recently made to a gaping young reporter from *Newsweek*, a journal that has come to be a kind of intellectual delicatessen for clods and intellectualoids alike. According to Mr. Dylan: "Saturn has been an obstacle in my planetary system. It's been there for the last few ages and just removed itself from my system. I feel free and unburdened." Bear this in mind the next time someone tells you Mr. Dylan is a genius. And when you are abused with that claptrap about his being the conscience of an era, remember how he squirmed through this one: "I'd be doing what I'm doing if I was a millionaire or not, whether I was getting paid for it or not. In the sixties there was a certain bunch of us who came through the wars. There was a lot of death during that time. The sixties were filled with it. It has helped me to grow up. The seventies are more realistic, but the sixties exposed the roots of that realism." It is not without reason that Mr. Dylan has chosen to avoid public interviews, a few more embarrassments of that magnitude and Woody Allen will be making movies about this renowned lyrical conscience.

Still, despite the pedestrian quality of the man's mind and my perverse suspicion that his musical gifts are on a par with those of Hoagy Carmichael, Mr. Dylan does possess one talent that fetches my admiration. Mr. Dylan has charisma, that curious anesthetic that reduces the most gnarled cynic to the gentleness of a cooing babe even in our own era of compulsory impiety. How he, an unlettered slob, acquired this mysterious effluvium I do not know. Perhaps he has laid hands on the secret ingredients to Teddy Kennedy's deodorant or maybe the Holy Ghost had a hand in it. But the fact remains that he obviously sparkles with the stuff and even leaves it in the ring on his bathtub.

Now a man sporting charisma has a huge and unfair advantage over his fellows, and when socialism comes to these shores, charisma will be the first thing we shall expropriate. The man who has it can fix his eyes upon you and remind you of the glories of Alexander. He nods his head or waves his hand, and you see Caesar and Marc Antony. When he sighs one thinks of Goethe. When he groans one hears Brahms. And his simple utterances—no matter how inane or paralogistic they might be—are always ventilated by enough ingratiating ellipses that you can still assume you are in the presence of Socrates. Yet through it all, as the charismatic struts and poses and releases his sonorities, where do his thoughts really dwell? About what is he really thinking? I suspect that while he nods magisterially and intones his platitudes, his mind—when not fixed on your wallet or your woman—wanders off towards the golf course, or a swell cherry soda to which he once abandoned himself, or a cold beer for which he now yearns. In the end I suspect charisma is that solemnity of countenance that deludes an audience into thinking it sits in the presence of a truly stupendous intellect even when all that the great man is thinking about is how he longs to slip into a dry pair of socks. Mr. Dylan follows in the great tradition of Aimee Semple McPherson and Warren Gamaliel Harding. He is at one with Rod McKuen.

J.W. Fulbright, Heavenly Body

IF AFTER MY YEARS of puzzling travail on this earthly ball I should exit for the Heavenly Feast, I pray that I shall find myself strumming a harp somewhere in the vicinity of J.W. Fulbright's cloud. To my mind the man is one of the glories of American diplomatic history. He ranks with Senator Key Pittman and the great Borah, and I shall not be coy about telling him of the colossal esteem I have borne for him.

In fact I shall gambol right up to the great man and tell him that in my opinion he has been the most intelligent man in the entire United States Senate. He is integrity, solid and unblemished. He has been democracy's conscience, an intrepid warrior against the totalitarians of the world, and an unflagging defender of international civility. He forthrightly supported black men in the South even during those grim days of yore when, among other abominations, they suffered the cruelty of being called Negroes. I shall tell him that I have always considered him the preeminent civil libertarian in the Senate, the most humble man in public life, and the modern paradigm of Jeffersonian simplicity. I shall tell him that for my money he is the exemplar of principled statesmanship. He is consistency unalloyed. I shall congratulate him for his gallantry, his manners, and his enormous contribution to the commonweal. I shall slap him on the back, offer him a voluptuous cigar, and extol his sincerity.

The long and the short of it is that when we guzzle ambrosia together I shall toast old Fulbright for all those admirable qualities that in his heart of hearts he knows he does not possess. Then I shall wink at him and depart for Mr. Nixon's cloud.

Robert Preston, Ignoramus

NO YOKEL IN American history has quite so artlessly flummoxed an appointment with celebrity, prosperity, and power as Mr. Robert Preston, the audacious young grease monkey who became the first person ever to lead an aerial assault on the White House when he attempted to ram it with his pilfered UH-1 (Huey) helicopter. The exact date of his tryst was February 17, and, so far as my staff has been able to ascertain, Jehovah reserved that date for him with no strings attached. Nonetheless, Mr. Preston blew it. While looking a gift horse in the mouth, he fell into a funk, and the wheel of history ground on. By the time he had come to, his hour had passed. He had slipped back into the shadows where

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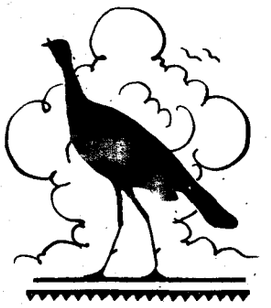

Alan Reynolds

Should Oil Be Profitable?

It is no excuse for presumptuous ignorance that it is directed by insolent passion.
—Edmund Burke (1777)

YOU ALREADY know the story. Oil companies created the shortage to drive up prices, push the Alaskan pipeline through, soften environmental roadblocks, and weed-out those pesky independents. That is, big oil cut supplies to increase supplies, and raised prices to squeeze competitors. "There are some," wrote Brit Hume (Jack Anderson's Sancho Panza), "who believe the major oil companies conspired to bring about these results." The oil majors "wallowed in profits," added *Time*, "after-tax earnings at Exxon in the third quarter, for example, soared 80 per cent." Such profit increases, reports the *National Observer*, "set off a wave of criticism from lawmakers concerned that the industry may be reaping a windfall from the hardships of millions of citizens."

But third quarter profits obviously had no bearing on the oil crunch, which wasn't even announced until the fourth quarter. To imply that third quarter profits resulted from scarcity ignores the fact that unit sales of the big seven oil companies were up 6 percent in the first three quarters of 1973. Exxon's 80 percent gain in the third quarter was well above the 46 percent average for the "seven sisters." Taking the first nine months of 1973 as a whole, Exxon's profits rose 59 percent above the level of a year before, and sales were up 40 percent. Note that this compares with a 93 percent profit increase for the *New York Times* during the same period, and 57 percent for the *Washington Post*. The brokerage house of Wagenseller & Durst compared the return on stockholder equity of eleven oil majors with the combined return of ABC, CBS, the *New York Times, Time, Times Mirror,* and the *Washington Post*. The result: 14.7 percent for oil, 22 percent for the oil critics.

The percentage increase game was played again in the fourth quarter, but one had to be even more selective. I don't recall any headlines about the fact that Standard of Ohio's profits were down 40 percent. Significantly, Sohio ranks first among oil companies in domestic reserves per dollar of common stock. So much for self-sufficiency.

Many oil companies continued to do well, however, and Exxon's profits maintained that 59 percent lead. Booming profits were common in 1973, partly because everything expressed in dollars went up (dollars expressed in terms of everything went down). The Department of Commerce attributes 42 percent of the increase in pretax profits of nonfinancial corporations in the first nine months of 1973 to "inventory profit"—i.e., the effect of inflation in raising the value of inventories. Profits last year were generally exaggerated and overtaxed because of temporary inventory profits, depreciation being allowed only on the preinflation costs of machinery, and the general erosion of the purchasing power of a buck. George Terborgh has adjusted accordingly, and found that after-taxprofits of nonfinancial corporations, expressed in 1965 dollars, fell from $36.1 billion in 1965 to $18.6 billion in 1973. Adjusted retained earnings, after paying dividends, fell from $19.2 billion to $2.1 billion—which is surely a major explanation for the widespread "failure" of industries to invest enough to eliminate shortages.

With this in mind, it is not as easy to be upset because Del Monte's profits were up 82.5 percent in the fourth quarter, or because U.S. Steel's profits were up 91.1 percent, not to mention MGM (profits up 289 percent—I told you not to mention it).

But percentage increases convey no information whatsoever. My weight is up 25 percent—am I fat or thin? My income rose 100 percent in two years—am I rich or poor? In the *New York Times* (January 13, 1974) Tom Wicker reported that Occidental Petroleum had a 417 percent increase in net profits in the first nine months of 1973. What wasn't mentioned is the fact that Occidental's *1972* profits were only four-tenths of one percent of sales, and that Occidental's petroleum operations are almost entirely overseas. Gulf's 1972 profits were a modest 3.2 percent of sales, so they too showed a sizable (79 percent) increase. Tom Wicker even managed to get a column out of being outraged about Gulf's best quarter.

If oil is so profitable, one would expect critics to put their money where their mouths are. There are more than enough critics to drive the stock prices sky-high. But Exxon's stock rose only 8 percent last year, Mobil's fell 28 percent, and Texaco's fell 22 percent. These are the oil companies with the highest profit gains in the fourth quarter. The apparent paradox is explained by the fact that stock purchases are geared to future earnings, not to the recent past.

Before we get into the prospects for oil profits, several complications should be mentioned. First, most multinationals sell more abroad than they do here. A sizable part of last year's "windfall" (about 30 percent of the increase in Texaco's foreign earnings) was due to the effect of dollar devaluation on foreign currencies held by foreign subsidiaries. Exxon's 59 percent profit gain translates into an 83 percent gain in earnings from over 100 foreign countries, and a 16 percent gain in the United States. Only 16 percent of Exxon's production and 32 percent of its sales are from the United States. Texaco earned 65 percent of its profits abroad, and had only a 3.6 percent gain in profits from U.S. operations. Most European governments attracted ample supplies, and cut demand, by letting gasoline prices rise by about as much as the total price here (the U.S. price, if you subtract excise taxes, is still about the same as for distilled water). The "socialist" government of West Germany relied completely on a free-market solution, and now faces the highest growth and lowest inflation in Europe. Italy, like the United States, tried "tough" (stupid) price controls, and thus drained the blood from its economy. No other country has matched our insanity in allocating fuel according to "priorities" (favoritism) and 1972 use.

Second, with all the loose talk about big fish swallowing little fish, it isn't widely noticed that the big fish are foreign: Burmah Oil (London Exchange) acquired Signal, the half-nationalized British Petroleum company will soon have a controlling chunk of Sohio. "I don't think that we should be unnecessarily pressuring mul-

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tinational corporations that are based here," warns Attorney General William Saxbe, "they'll just base someplace else. They'll have to." With huge national oil companies developing in most of the oil-rich nations, current congressional proposals could help translate the names of the biggest companies into Arabic or Spanish. If we levy stiff U.S. taxes on oil produced and sold abroad, that would put U.S. multinationals at an enormous disadvantage in competition with foreign-based giants like British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell. If we keep domestic crude at half the price of foreign crude (Henry Jackson's brainstorm), foreign producers will be able to attract the lion's share of equipment and expertise.

Third, the oil companies don't just sell oil. Cities Service and Continental Oil are definitely conglomerates; Sohio, Continental, and Occidental own very sizable U.S. coal companies; Gulf operates the new town of Reston, Virginia, and is considering buying Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey Circus. In view of the threats of nationalization, even here, there is every reason to expect more and more oil companies to move out of oil and into other fields. That would certainly be my advice to the oil majors—if they must stay in countries where they aren't welcome, like the United States. There's enough risk in the oil business without adding political caprice.

Fourth, the enormous size of the industry simply means that people choose to buy a lot of their products. *U.S. News & World Report* says, "The oil business is huge . . . its total profits are larger than for any other industry." Tom Wicker complains that "Exxon recently announced the largest annual profit ever earned by any industrial company." These statements have no economic significance whatsoever: both are logically compatible with inadequate profits, or with the absence of a dominant firm within this large international market.

These caveats aside, the oil companies definitely *did* earn "windfall" and "excess" profits in 1973. When inventories have been purchased at a low price, and rising demand allows these inventories to be sold at a high price, the result is an unanticipated "windfall." If the outcome had been widely anticipated, it would not have been possible to purchase the inventories at a low price. This is why windfalls are, by definition, ephemeral. When the oil companies go to replenish their inventories, all concerned—from foreign governments to domestic laborers—will get a piece of the action. Costs will rise to eliminate the windfall. Yet those who are talking about taxing-away the windfall profits (windfalls to governments are apparently o.k.) are not talking about 1973 profits, but about 1974 and beyond.

Few investment advisers are confident that oil company profits are secure, and most are suggesting investing in companies that supply the oil companies (e.g., by building refineries). This indicates that costs are expected to rise more than revenues. About a fourth of the cost of operating a refinery, for example, is fuel to run its boilers: Ironically, this fuel is usually imported from Venezuela, and the cost has soared. I seriously doubt that 1974 oil industry profits on U.S. operations will be as high, as a percentage of sales or equity, as in 1973. Total dollar profits will drop sharply if federal allocation and price controls keep U.S. refineries from drawing foreign oil away from Europe's relatively free markets. Contrary to the prevailing demonology, it is very hard to make as much money on a much smaller volume.

"Excess" profits seems to mean above the average for either the industry or nation. George Shultz, my favorite treasury secretary, figures that the rate of return for twenty-two large oil companies averaged 15.1 percent in 1973. That compares with 10.9 percent for those companies in the previous decade, and about 13 percent for all manufacturing in 1973. Thus, oil profits, at least for these twenty-two firms, were clearly "excessive." Of course, it isn't too hard to beat the industry's own average return on equity, which fell each year from 12.5 percent in 1967 to 8.7 percent in 1972, and was usually below the average for manufacturing.

The Comparison of Profits to Investment for Texaco ($ millions)

Year	Net Income	Capital & Exploratory Expenditures
1973	1,292.4	1,333.9
1972	889.0	1,192.9
1971	903.9	1,162.2
1970	822.0	906.1
1969	769.8	791.9
1968	819.6	1,065.3
1967	750.5	893.7
1966	671.8	737.4
1965	590.9	718.9
1964	540.7	604.8

Note: Direct taxes (foreign and domestic) exceeded net income in every year since 1967. About 55 percent of capital and exploratory expenditures were in the United States in 1973.

Now while windfall profits from devaluation or inflation are just a lucky break, excess profits are the stuff that spark, fuel, and lubricate our economy. Even in a hypothetical stationary equilibrium, some profits must be above average to compensate for risk. Excess *losses* also serve the vital function of telling capital and labor to switch to new techniques or products.

Yet Congress would, on a dare, tax away excess profits and subsidize excess losses (e.g., Lockheed, Penn Central). "We should consider taxing excessive profits wherever they occur," says Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, "not only petroleum or energy companies, but across the board and throughout industry." The underlying notion is to level every firm up or down to a "fair return"—a variant of the "just price." To the degree that this is tried, and it has been, resources are immobilized and entrepreneurship is stifled (congressmen should be required to read Israel Kirzner's *Competition & Entrepreneurship*). Profits must be free to deviate from the norm, because such deviations are signals for capital to move from losers to winners.

Resources can be devoted to current consumption (making food or fuel) or to expanding capacity for future production (making fertilizer plants or refineries). Land, labor, and machinery can't be doing two things at the same time. Tax and monetary policies encourage consumption and indebtedness, while many government policies discourage or even penalize saving and private investment. Banks, for example, aren't allowed to offer more than about 6 percent interest to small savers—even during a 9 percent inflation. The flood of government bonds is a drain on the private capital market—not a "fiscal stimulus." The result of this sort of thing is that people have the dollars and desire to buy more than can be produced.

Given this shortage of capital, which investment adviser T.J. Holt estimates at $75 billion, we should nonetheless want to see a sizable chunk being attracted to oil and other goods that are getting scarce and therefore profitable. John Winegar of Chase Manhattan's Energy Economics Division estimates that even the 1973 oil profits will fall short "by more than a billion dollars" of meeting capital needs. Between 1970 and 1985, says Winegar, the petroleum industry will need $1.35 trillion to keep up with demand—which implies an annual earnings growth of 18 percent. Banks turn out some pretty scholarly research, as a service to their customers (banks, like all industries where competition is banned, compete in frills). But "asking Chase's view of oil compnay profits," according to John Lee of the *New York Times*, "is like asking Herbert Stein's opinion of President Nixon's budge message." *Time* said something equally cute, and equally libelous, implying that it's all a matter of opinion and bank opinions are too biased to deserve serious consideration. If one must reduce matters so, it should be noted that when the oil companies can't finance operations out of profits, they borrow from banks. Banks do control a lot of oil stock (through pension funds and the like), but it is a simple matter to switch to something more profitable, like soft drinks.

The other side of keeping some profits down, as we noted, is keeping others up. Federal Energy Office favoritism for industries that use a lot of energy is a serious obstruction to necessary adjustments. The rationale, as always, is to "save jobs." But industries that use a lot of energy don't use a lot of labor. Energy-intensive industries should not be artificially insulated, through "priority" allocations, from resource scarcity. If they can't bid oil away from competing uses, that means consumers prefer the other uses—including driving their cars. This isn't an either/or decision, but a matter of marginal adjustments: a decline in the use of plastic containers and aluminum beer cans, an increase in the use of cotton textiles instead of polyester.

Ecologist Barry Commoner wrote a column entitled, "Profit Motive is Root of Our Crises." He reasons that "as power has been increasingly introduced there has been a comparable decrease in labor needed . . . Thus, as power productivity declined [*sic*], labor productivity increased. . . . Profits depend on labor productivity." The conclusion is absolutely wrong, of course. Profits depend on the difference between how much money you take in and how much you spend. Low labor productivity can be very profitable if wages are also low (e.g., Hong

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Kong). Firms substituted energy for labor partly because energy has been cheaper (not that one can make paint out of labor alone). Labor has been relatively costly because "labor" productivity rose, which in turn is largely due to the use of energy-using machines. Commoner's theory would lead one to believe that labor productivity (and real wages) should fall, and that we should substitute human for nonhuman energy—a strange conclusion indeed. As energy costs rise, events may follow Commoner's prescription. But it is incredible to claim that only profits would be affected. The real motivation behind the use of energy is the desire to have more goodies with less work. That's the definition of an increase in the real wage.

As an illustration of his theory, Commoner complains that "we now use . . . high-compression smog-generating engines instead of low-compression smog-free engines." Commoner must own a very old car. Since the Clean Air Act of 1970, cars have had inefficient low-compression engines with elaborate smog devices, and these changes have increased gasoline consumption by some 300,000 barrels a day. That may be a necessary cost of reasonable air quality, though even Congress is having doubts, but it is hardly a result of the "profit motive." New models are carrying an extra couple of hundred pounds of costly bumpers, which few would voluntarily pay for, and this too cuts mileage. More than half the new cars sold are compact or mini, but they don't get better mileage than a 1954 Cadillac.

I have been accused of simply making "a concise summary of the oil industry's arguments," and favoring "artificial devices which interfere with the free-market mechanisms" (Brit Hume, the *New York Times Magazine*, January 6, 1974). So, I will now demonstrate the proper way to attack the oil industry. First, I have always openly opposed oil import quotas, and would have few objections to eliminating depletion allowances on new wells. But it seems silly to blame special-interest legislation on the special interests rather than on (a) the mixed economy which allows such things, and (b) corrupt and foolish legislators. Second, the oil industry wrongly blames high consumption on naughty consumers rather than on low prices. Most industry spokesmen have also supported government allocation (with favoritism to big business) and rationing, which is hardly the essence of my position. I have seen few things that I disagreed with more strongly than an obnoxious speech by the president of the American Petroleum Institute in Los Angeles, December 4, 1973: "We are all going to have to really tighten our energy belts," said Frank Ikard. "This will mean . . . fuels allocation, and it probably will mean fuels rationing. . . . But any rationing program must be predicated on a sound priorities system. . . . Personal comfort and convenience must—of necessity—rank below the priority classes. . ." Ugh. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if the scoundrels were behind all this talk about federal regulation, since everyone (except Tom Wicker) knows that's the road to *minimum* price enforcement and taxpayer underwriting of losses (e.g., airlines, trucks, railroads, telephones, stock brokers. . .). Have you ever heard of a regulated industry asking to be deregulated? Okay, one—natural gas—but no others.

Third, the *Wall Street Journal* (February 7, 1974) notes that after-tax profits in oil have not been quite as high as elsewhere, despite supposedly preferential tax treatment. "So far as we can see," says the *Journal*, "the only possible interpretation of this is that profit margins in the oil industry have been under competitive pressure, and because of the same pressure the effect of tax breaks has been passed along in lower prices to the consumer." Well, if we knew for sure that the corporate tax was completely shifted to consumers, rather than also coming out of stockholder income and funds available for growth, then we might be able to say that reductions in the corporate tax only benefit consumers. But tax subsidies, and direct subsidies, are usually at least partly capitalized within the price of the favored commodity. Thus, tax advantages for homeowners drive up the price of houses and residential property. Those who are buying at this late date get no net advantage. Making municipal bonds tax-free drives up their prices and lowers the yield. Similarly, when the depletion allowance was introduced in 1926 it presumably increased the price of oil stock, and attracted producers who would otherwise be unable to cut the mustard. The latter, after all, was the intended effect. Among stockholders, however, only those who got in before the tax break would stand to benefit from it. Conversely, reducing the depletion allowance in 1969 imposed a rather unfair windfall loss on those who had purchased stock at a price reflecting any tax advantage. This surely contributed to the paucity of investment capital in the industry, which is sometimes (e.g., by Tom Wicker) called a "failure" to build sufficient capacity. Thus, while many tax breaks may have been a mistake from the start, they are not easy to get rid of.

Finally, the monopoly issue is as irrelevant as it is implausible. "In theory," says S. David Freeman, director of the Ford Foundation Energy Policy Project, "higher prices will not only dampen demand but provide the incentive for increased supply. This is true if an industry behaves in a competitive manner. But is there competition in the American energy industry?" Freeman doesn't bother to answer the question, but it's a red herring anyway. Once a monopoly has found the wealth-maximizing combination of price and output, it responds to changing supply and demand conditions exactly as a competitive firm would. If that sounds strange, you have been listening to the Big Lie too often, instead of browsing through any good economics text. Try Alchian & Allen's *University Economics* or Roger Miller's *Economics Today*. A hint: If the oil industry could increase profits by cutting supply, why did it wait until 1972–1973 to do so?

Well, these are complex matters. And people are talking economics even when they don't realize it. The trouble is that the discussion is so uniformly poor, especially when conducted by natural scientists and journalists. These people simply don't understand the significance of statistics, the role of profit, or the nature of taxes and monopolies. So why don't they have the decency and humility to just shut up? □

Eugene H. Methvin

The Hypocrisy of Absolute Privilege

JUST A FEW MONTHS ago, it seemed as if every reporter in the nation was being chased by a sheriff with a subpoena. If you believed what you read in the newspapers and saw on the newscasts, it looked as if the White House and Justice Department were about to abolish the First Amendment and put all the journalists in jail.

Now it looks as though the journalists are about to abolish the Administration and put everybody in the White House and Justice Department in jail.

If things can change so fast, it just goes to show you shouldn't take the present mess too hard. In the space of three months, we are seeing some of the wackiest reversals in the history of circus acrobatics. Most journalists and newspapers were demanding "absolute privilege" for themselves last spring. Now they are denouncing the President for daring to claim "executive privilege" for himself and his White House tapes. Just listen to some of them.

The *Washington Post* found that the President's assertion of executive privilege "comes very close to an assertion that certain aspects of the presidency are apart from and above the rule of law" (July 29, 1973).

The *New York Times* declared, "This new Nixon Doctrine virtually sets the person of the President above law and public ethics" (July 24, 1973).

Yet both newspapers a few months ago were assuring us that the free press would be dead without absolute privilege. Typically, Walter Cronkite declared (May 2, 1973) that reporters' sources must be granted an absolute privilege or the free press is finished:

"The only remedy is a law that states simply, and therefore eloquently, that the First Amendment means what it says and no reporter can be hailed before any government body and forced to reveal confidential sources of information."

Yet we are now assured that freedom will

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be equally dead if the President succeeds in maintaining confidentiality of the White House tapes.

It seems to me New Jersey's governor gave us a wiser guide in vetoing a bill to give newsmen a broad privilege. He said: "It is no more acceptable to have the press all powerful than to have the government all powerful."

I find it hard to see why a reporter should be allowed to refuse a subpoena while the President of the United States should be required to answer it. As Senator Sam would say, it seems to me either one could respond to orderly inquiry in proper cases, and "the heavens wouldn't fall." What's sauce for the gabbling geese of the Fourth Estate ought to be sauce for the great big gander in the White House.

Did anyone notice that the very session of the Ervin Committee that voted to subpoena the President was held in the secrecy of executive session? The senators wanted to cloak their deliberations in secrecy so individuals could speak their minds. That's the same reason reporters need a reasonable confidentiality for their sources. And it's the same reason the President wants to maintain the confidentiality of his White House conferences and papers.

We can laugh at the contradiction in the Fourth Estate's stance. Otherwise, we'd be obliged to weep—because it means we've lost all sense of moderation, all ability to see other sides of an argument.

As a practicing shoe-leather reporter corrupted by the study of law, I'd like to say a few words on the ethics of burglary and cover-ups and the people's right to know. After all, what were those Watergate burglars going to do with any interesting documents they found, but leak them to Jack Anderson?

Anderson's own top investigator was recently arrested and charged with possessing documents stolen from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A grand jury had the good sense to no-bill the case. Later Anderson's sidekick asserted he would indeed have put the documents to use for their column if there had been anything interesting in them—but it turned out to be only a law book, among other things.

He wrote: "Such a 'use' of Government documents—stolen or not—has been protected by the Constitution" (*New York Times*, February 8, 1973). I bet you didn't know we journalists have a Constitutional right to steal, or at least to receive stolen documents, did you? (President Nixon doesn't need a good lawyer. He needs a press card.)

I confess to being puzzled at the journalistic outrage over the Watergate break-in. Journalists ought to have considerable sympathy for the burglars.

It was, after all, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* that first made wholesale theft of documents in this town stylish by making much hoopla over Jack Anderson's subornation of the burglary of Senator Tom Dodd's office. They all used the stolen Dodd documents to stage one of the most celebrated mass media lynchings of recent times.

Drowned out was the still, small murmur of those who doubted the propriety of such burglaries in pursuit of "the people's right to know."

Indeed, the Pulitzer Prize selection committee, composed of our most distinguished journalists, voted to honor Anderson for that coup. The Columbia trustees stopped them. But nobody went to jail for the theft. In fact, the thieves were praised for patriotism and idealism—though they were actually motivated by the basest personal vengeancy.

We had another celebrated case a few years back involving filching files and bugging the office of a State Department security officer. His sin was testifying truthfully under subpoena before a Senate committee. The bugging boss in that case gave false testimony, and was rewarded with a cushy job in—of all places—the Federal Communications Commission. On that round there was no outcry from the Fourth Estate of "foul" or "cover-up."

So why should the Watergate burglars have thought they were engaging in any serious felony? If Jack Anderson deserves a Pulitzer, so do G. Gordon Liddy and E.

Howard Hunt. They've all sought to liberate the secret files of Washington with equal zest and a common methodology.

In fact, Anderson reportedly has known one of the Watergate burglars for years—Frank Sturgis—and got him out of jail after the break-in. Probably he was hoping for a few useful documents in gratitude; or maybe professional services at some future date.

I confess once again to being thoroughly confused. After all, I went to both journalism school and law school, and both teach you to ask mean questions.

For example, is there really any difference between stealing Ellsberg's psychiatrist's files or a Democratic senator's files, and stealing the Democratic Party's files or Defense Department files, so that the public might learn the secrets hidden there? (And I shouldn't leave out those stolen FBI files from the Media, Pennsylvania, office.)

Would the fearless purveyors of the stolen Dodd papers and the stolen Pentagon papers and the stolen FBI papers have turned up their noses at any juicy scandal offered in some stolen Democratic National Committee papers? Is it okay if you don't actually execute the burglary yourself—if you only take the burglars' swag and ask no questions about where they got it?

Checks and balances. The men who wrote the U.S. Constitution feared two extremes—tyranny and anarchy, an unchecked centralized authority, and a disintegration of authority into popular tumult. It seems to me we're not teetering between the two extremes, with each ogre chasing us toward the other. (Aristotle noted this natural tendency in popular governments two thousand years ago.)

We see the Fourth Estate asserting that reporters must not even be summoned into a grand jury room. We see journalists claiming the right to publish anything they can glean or steal from government files during wartime, even if it jeopardizes the government's capacity to negotiate secretly through foreign governments to end the killing.

All in the name of "the people's right to know." Don't the people have a right *not* to know a few things?

Here we have a disguise for lawlessness that is as dangerous as the spirit embodied in the Watergate scandal: that any action under cloak of a high-minded cause is constitutional, lawful, laudable.

The journalist's demand for an absolute privilege of secrecy for his sources violates a basic rule of checks and balances—that no man shall be a judge in his own cause. It is as arrogant in its way as was Attorney General John Mitchell's assertion of an absolute right to wiretap or bug any person he chooses in pursuit of domestic tranquility.

It asserts that one should be above the law, that he will not trust our time-tested institution of due process adjudication.

For my part, as one journalist, I not only find such assertions abhorrent, I find them among the gravest threats to a free press in my memory. They represent First Amendment Ku Kluxery. And they must be opposed by thoughtful friends of the First Amendment. Only a fair press will remain a free press.

And those listening closely to the grassroots can hear a strong counterpoint behind the noise and public outrage over Watergate. It is outrage at the news media's super righteousness and—in many instances, demonstrable carelessness with the truth and reputations of innocent individuals or with public welfare and tranquility.

People are fed up with the attitude represented by Jack Anderson's ballet in the Eagleton affair—that it is more important to lynch a suspected scoundrel in the media than to check the facts first and be absolutely fair and accurate. And that attitude is all too widespread.

In fact, if anything can rationally explain the self-confessed conduct of John Mitchell, Jeb Magruder, and John Dean in covering up behind the Watergate burglars, it is an exaggerated fear of exactly this kind of mass-media extremism. And certain it is that extremism begets extremism.

Most journalists, it seems, have not read the Bill of Rights beyond the First Amendment—to the Sixth Amendment, for example, which gives a criminal defendant an unadulterated right to compulsory process—presumable against reporters, too. And it grants a right to confront witnesses, not faceless, anonymous "sources close to" somebody.

Few journalists have any concept of our time-tested constitutional and legal methods, or of the case-by-case definition of rights and balancing of conflicting rights through due process of law. Unfortunately, life itself does not grant any absolute certainties. So how can a Bill of Rights do so?

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As Justice Holmes once put it, a man's rights often depend upon his estimating correctly what a jury will later decide. And a good lawyer today would add: upon his estimating correctly what five justices will later agree on. (You see how far we've come in the fifty years since Holmes spoke in transferring power from juries to judges.)

The fact remains: rights must be asserted and defended in specific cases and circumstances, and against other parties asserting conflicting rights and values. And juries and judges must decide these cases and controversies "in the totality of circumstances," to quote one pregnant legalism. And legislators know full well they can never write rules to cover every case.

The Philadelphia Framers recognized the indistinct boundary when they deposited "the judicial power" and "the legislative power" into separate laps, without any effort to define the limits of judicial review and legislative supremacy. But too few of our journalists have any comprehension of this historic tradition and process.

Journalistic partisanship in asserting our own rights results in large areas of public ignorance and confusion. The media are filled with *ex parte* self-assertion and adulation. The dissenters are seldom heard.

The job of filling the void necessarily must devolve upon the men of the bar, schooled in law and history. Frequently, lawyers must tell clients about the limits on their legal rights. And lawyers will have to tell the journalists they can't have their way all the way, all the time, either.

This means there will necessarily be perpetual static between the press and the bar. Lawyers are accustomed to winning some and losing some. In every case, some lawyers are losers. But journalists are accustomed to being right always.

Remember that great scene from Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*? The billionaire cannon king asks his freshly graduated son how he plans to make a living, since he repudiates the cannon business: "Is there anything you know or care for?"

Stephen answers: "I know the difference between right and wrong!"

This hugely tickles the cannon king: "What!" he cackles. "No capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy, only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. At 24, too! Stephen, I've found your profession for you. You're a born journalist."

Needless to say, I believe in checks and balances. I think, when Chief Justice John Marshall asserted the right to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional, some journalist should have asked instantly who would declare acts of the judiciary unconstitutional?

And when journalists assert the right to refuse subpoenas, some lawyer must ask who will call them to account? And of course when the President asserts such a right, the same question must be raised and resolved.

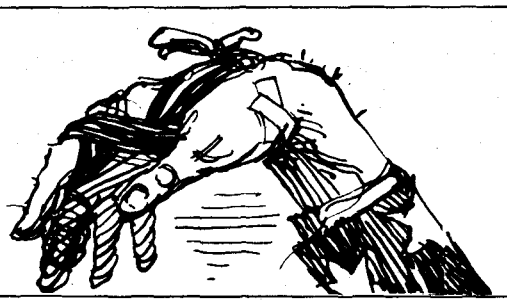
So I would offer one small proposal to advance the cause of the law. I would suggest that lawyers arrange with the law schools to swing the doors wide for journalists to enter as special students, to take such courses as legal method, practice and procedure, evidence, and constitutional law. Let's get more journalists into the law schools, and more lawyers into the press box and on camera.

When we watch the performance of such reporter-lawyers as Fred Graham and Clark Mollenhoff, we cannot help but be inspired to hope for this trend to grow.

I cannot give you stone tablets telling you the difference between right and wrong. But I can pass along one certain observation be by a great journalist, H.L. Mencken:

"The American form of government is the most *entertaining* form of government ever devised by man." □

The Nation's Pulse



by Frederic Nelson

Some Thoughts on Impeachment

THE MAKERS OF the American Constitution took impeachment very seriously. They had experienced under the British Crown the consequences of unregulated executive power and were determined not to see such an experience repeated. On the other hand, they knew a great deal about mob violence and the fickleness of public opinion. The Boston Tea Party was a memory and Shay's Rebellion was a contemporary event. These considerations bulked large in the debate in the Philadelphia convention of 1787, and in the later campaign to persuade the states to adopt the new Constitution.

Where should the power to impeach a chief executive for "high crimes and misdemeanors" reside? Some of the delegates thought impeachment should be a function of the courts. James Madison of Virginia and Charles Pinckney of South Carolina thought well of this idea, fearing that impeachment by the legislature, more widely advocated, would make the executive overdependent on the legislature. Pinckney predicted that, if a president should "oppose a favorite law, the two houses will combine against him and under the influence of heat and faction, throw him out of office": all this before the press had become more than an occasional nuisance with power to create "heat and faction" on its own. Trial by the Supreme Court was voted down on the ground that the Court might be in the position of reviewing its own judgments in case a convicted chief executive was later tried for other offenses.

The solution finally adopted was believed to have avoided the danger that the leaders of popular factions would proceed against a president for political reasons. As Alexander Hamilton put it in the *Federalist*, "the difficulty of placing it [the power of impeachment] in a government resting entirely on the basis of periodical elections will be readily perceived when it is considered that the most conspicuous characters in it will, from that circumstance, be too often the leaders or the tools of the most numerous faction, and on this account can hardly be expected to possess the requisite neutrality towards those whose conduct may be the object of scrutiny." That disposed of the popularly elected House of Representatives as the judges of the accused.

The Senate, argued Hamilton, was a body "sufficiently dignified and sufficiently independent" and "confident enough of its own situation" to be able to preserve a judicial attitude. This was the case because senators were not to be elected by popular vote, but "appointed" by state legislatures. Thus selected, the Senate was expected to be, in the words of Madison, a small body of men able to "proceed with more coolness, more system and with more wisdom than the popular branch." John Dickinson of Delaware opined that election of senators by state legislatures would "draw forth the first characters, whether as to family or talent." A scattering of delegates favored popular election of senators, but the sense of the convention was pretty well summarized by Eldridge Gerry of Massachusetts who thought "the commercial and moneyed interests would be more secure in the hands of the State legislatures than of the peoples at large. . . . The people are for paper money when the legislatures are against it." Madison agreed that the senators "should come from and represent wealth." Besides, the senators, being members of the smaller body, would be less likely than the House to "partake of the infirmities of their constituents."

The Seventeenth Amendment, adopted in 1913, decreeing that senators should be chosen by popular vote, changed the picture radically. Today a senator, instead of being the sublime elder statesman envisaged by the Founding Fathers—beyond the reach of popular clamor and free to judge controversial issues on their merits—is as likely to be a demagogue as his junior in the House. Nay, even more likely, because a

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senator is more conspicuously visible. He is constantly under pressure from every sort of vocative group and interest, badgered by the media from poll to poll, whereas a member of the House can usually manage to keep his ideology to himself because many people in his own district do not even know his name. This is surely one reason why common sense often gets a better reception in the House than in the Senate.

Therefore if the President is to be impeached for "high crimes and misdemeanors," as appears to me unlikely, his senatorial judges will be a group quite different from the incorruptible patricians envisioned by the Founding Fathers. Few pre-1913 senators lived up to the billing of a senator in the 1787 convention, but they were at least free of the problems which beset their post-1913 successors. A popularly elected senator is likely to consult the most recent Gallup Poll or the bumper-sticker count before making up his mind on anything, and in a matter so certain to tilt the polls off balance as a trial of Nixon, sticking to the evidence would be difficult.

A senator of the variety decreed in 1787 could vote for or against conviction, unmoved by cries of "Sell-Out!" on the one hand or "Toady to the media!" on the other. But a post-1913 senator—I don't know. Indeed, if the wise men of 1787 had foreseen what was to happen to the Senate, they might well have thought up some other machinery for the impeachment of public officials, including presidents, because direct election of senators has brought about the very conditions which they took such pains to prevent. □

Special Book Review

Rawls and Redistribution

JOHN RAWLS' *A Theory of Justice** is a book about political justice written by a professor of philosophy, but it is not a work of political philosophy. The political philosopher seeks to discover what true principles of justice may lie behind men's conflicting opinions of what is just and unjust. Professor Rawls, by his own testimony, is engaged in a very different kind of enterprise—the attempt to formulate a set of principles that will support and systematize a given body of moral and political opinions. The crucial test of a theory of justice for Professor Rawls is the "capacity of its principles to accomodate our firmest convictions . . . ."Not surprisingly, his own theory meets this test—that is, it very nicely accommodates Professor Rawls' firmest convictions. But this, of course, only begs some more important questions: whether his opinions about the just and the unjust are sound ones; and whether his theory of justice provides, as he claims, "the most appropriate moral basis for a democratic society."

Professor Rawls purports to follow the tradition of thinkers who rested the foundation of political society on a social contract. His own conception of justice is based upon "principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interest would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association." What Rawls calls the "initial [or original] position" appears to be equivalent to the "state of nature" in older theories of the social contract, but there is an important difference. For he does not attempt to deduce the features of the original position from any historical or metaphysical reflections upon the nature of man and his place in the universe. The Rawlsian original position is simply a construct tailored to fit the view of justice he wishes to affirm: "The first task of a theory of justice is to define the initial situation so that the principles that result express the correct conception of justice from a philosophical point of view." If Professor Rawls is engaged in a kind of intellectual sleight of hand, at least he accompanies it with a candid admission of exactly what he is up to.

The device that Rawls employs to insure that human beings in the equal conditions of the original position will arrive at the "correct" conception of justice is the "veil of ignorance." This stipulates that, although "knowledge of the general facts about human society" is available, "no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like. Nor, again, does anyone know his conception of the good. . . ." This last condition, which turns out to be crucial for Rawls' whole enterprise, at first appears quite puzzling. The principles of justice, according to Rawls, are those that would be chosen in the original position by rational persons concerned to further their own interests. But if the veil of ignorance conceals from men any knowledge of their own conception of the good, how can they have any basis for choosing which principles would best further their interests?

Rawls attempts to meet this difficulty by means of the notion of "primary social goods," or what he later calls (perhaps more aptly than he intends) the "thin" theory of the good. These primary goods which encompass rights and liberties, opportunities and powers, income and wealth are defined as "things which it is supposed a rational man wants whatever else he wants." That is, they are considered to be desirable regardless of an individual's particular conception of the good, for they serve as necessary means to the achievement of almost any end. Therefore, it is assumed that persons in the original position will prefer more rather than less of these goods—and it is this preference that will guide their choice among potential principles of justice.

Now Rawls appears to regard this "thin" theory of the good as essentially noncontroversial and hence unexceptionable, but this is by no means the case. For it is not true that all conceptions of the good are furthered by the possession of a greater amount of the so-called primary goods. One need only think of the many moral and religious teachings which have stressed the harmful effects of wealth. It is simply not possible to define the goodness of anything as a means without reference to the ends for which it is to be used. To argue that the maximization of individual wealth is desirable is implicitly to argue for a certain conception of the good (if only that the good is whatever the passions of an individual lead him to desire) and to reject other conceptions of the good (those that proclaim a natural or supernatural end for man in terms of which a "minimal" or a "moderate" amount of wealth might be preferable to an "excessive" amount).

Thus, by making persons in the original position ignorant of their own conception of the good, but eager to "win for themselves the highest index of primary social goods," Rawls does not succeed in constructing a doctrine of justice that is prior to or impartial with respect to conceptions of the good. He merely postulates in a roundabout manner a conception of the good that calls for the maximization of individual liberty and wealth.

These two traditional aims of liberalism —the maximization of individual liberty and wealth—are at the core of Rawls' now famous two principles of justice:

1) "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others."

2) "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity."

The first principle follows rather obviously from the equal conditions prevailing in the original position and the desire of each individual to maximize his own liberty. Since the total sum of possible liberty cannot be increased by distributing it unequally, there is no reason for the parties to consent to anything but an equal distribution. In regard to wealth, however, the situation is different. A purely equal distribution of wealth would reduce the incentive of individuals to engage in economically productive activity, and thus would result in a lesser total amount of economic goods than would be secured by "permitting" an unequal distribution. Therefore, Rawls argues, persons in the original position would consent to inequalities in the distribution of wealth provided they improved the economic position of the

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least advantaged—that is, made the poorest members of the society richer than they would be if wealth were more equally distributed.

It is this second principle of justice (which Rawls labels the "difference principle") that is largely responsible for the excitement that has been generated by *A Theory of Justice* beyond the halls of academic departments of philosophy. The reasons for this excitement may briefly be explained as follows: During this century various government policies that alter the distribution of income (the graduated income tax, transfer payments, etc.) have come to be accepted as a matter of course. The original justification for these policies may have had nothing to do with the aim of redistribution as such, but their very existence seemed to show that the verdict of the economic market was not final, and that the distribution of income could legitimately be altered by political decisions. Once the market had thus lost its sanctity, it was but a short step to conclude that for the government to refrain from altering the distribution of income is no less a political decision than for it actively to engage in redistribution. In short, the whole issue of income distribution came to be regarded by some as an entirely *political* question. And for those with egalitarian inclinations, the question became: How can income inequality be justified at all? The greater total wealth produced by "allowing" an unequal distribution appeared to provide some such justification, but there was no clear standard available to balance off the good of greater total wealth against the evil—for the egalitarian—of greater income inequality. At this point, enter Professor Rawls and his "difference principle," which provides just such a standard.

The first point to be made here is that Professor Rawls and his fellow devotees of redistribution are far from being really committed to egalitarianism. For them the imperative to maximize individual wealth is clearly prior to the imperative of equal distribution. One can easily see this by considering that according to the "difference principle" a situation in which the poorest members of society had an annual income of $5,000 and the richest members an annual income of $1,000,000 would be preferable to a situation in which the poorest had $4,500 and the richest $10,000; for the former situation represents an improvement in the absolute income position of the least advantaged (from $4,500 to $5,000).

Rawls is simply unwilling to lower the general level of wealth for the sake of eliminating inequality. His attitude may be contrasted with that of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who believed that inequality was the chief source of misery for civilized men, and who thus unambiguously preferred a poor egalitarian society to a rich inegalitarian one. For this reason Rousseau favored an agrarian rather than a commercial society—but he never advocated a redistributive principle, and argued that "the right of property is the most sacred of all the rights of citizens."

The change in orientation that has taken place from Rousseau's thought to the egalitarianism of our contemporary redistributionists is in no way more strikingly illustrated than by Rawls almost total silence about the right of property. Rawls' refusal to acknowledge any right of property whose justification is anterior to the positive laws of a particular society follows from his more general refusal to admit the legitimacy of any principle of moral desert that makes distinctions among men.

The original source of the varying amounts of property acquired by men is their different talents, capacities, and characters. Those who are more skilled or who work harder will, other things being equal, earn more income than their fellows. The traditional liberal view held that these more productive individuals *deserve* the greater fruits of their labors. Rawls answers this traditional view by asserting that the man of superior talent or character does not deserve superior recompense because he did not deserve his superior talent or character in the first place. He argues as follows: "It seems to be one of the fixed points of our considered judgments that no one deserves his place in the distribution of native endowments, any more than one deserves one's initial starting place in society. The assertion that a man deserves the superior character that enables him to make the effort to cultivate his abilities is equally problematic; for his character depends in large part upon fortunate family and society circumstances for which he can claim no credit. The notion of desert seems not to apply to these cases."

The understanding, which lies at the heart of Rawls' entire moral orientation, completely severs any *moral* connection between work or excellence and reward. Talent and character come to be viewed simply as collective goods, not as individual goods. Indeed, Rawls characterizes the difference principle as an "agreement to regard the distribution of natural talents as a common asset and to share in the benefits of this distribution whatever it turns out to be." These "benefits" are, of course, the economic output of the society, which is thus to be distributed entirely without regard to the contributions made by individuals—except insofar as this will bring a collective benefit by making everyone better off. Differential rewards for individuals are justified only on practical grounds, never on moral grounds of individual desert.

Now it is no doubt true that most of us would share Rawls' "considered judgment" that "no one deserves his place in the distribution of native endowments" (though I believe few would be willing to agree that no man deserves his own character). The natural allotment of qualities that each of us receives is a dispensation of fate, and not of justice. But this does not mean that all the consequences that flow from this dispensation can simply be disregarded in formulating the principles of justice. After all, the very fact that we are born human beings (endowed with the "capacity for moral personality" that Rawls cites as the condition for being entitled to equal justice), rather than animals of a lower species, is also a dispensation of fate. A consideration of human justice must accept certain facts of nature as its starting point, and it must then seek principles that are in harmony with these facts.

It is Rawls' refusal to accept these natural facts as the starting point of moral philosophy that leads him to construct as the basis for his doctrine a wholly artificial "original position," which could never possibly exist among real human beings. He himself describes his procedure by saying, "The *arbitrariness of the world* [emphasis added] must be corrected for by adjusting the circumstances of the initial contractual situation." But the attempt to repeal or to "redress" the "arbitrariness of the world" in the name of some purely abstract conception of justice will only lead to concrete injustice toward actual living men.

This inevitable consequence is beautifully illustrated in Aristophanes' comedy, *The Assembly of Women (Ecclesiazusae).* In this play, a female government takes over in Athens and sets out to institute a regime of complete communism, including a community of women and children. But a telling objection is raised to this egalitarian proposal: All the men will wish to have sexual relations only with the most beautiful women. To obviate this difficulty an ingenious law is proposed, which nicely anticipates Professor Rawls' difference principle. Men will be allowed to sleep with a beautiful woman only after they have first satisfied an ugly woman. Thus the beautiful women can gain what they desire only if the least advantaged—the ugly—benefit as well.* The effects of this law are dramatized in a later scene, as a lovely young girl awaits the arrival of her lover, only to have him successively intercepted by three old hags, each uglier than the last, who importune him to fulfill his legal obligation.

The unnatural and unjust character of this law is brought home to all who view or read this play. It is unjust for the young man to be compelled to perform for the benefit of those who have no natural claim to his services. And though the young girl may not deserve her pleasing appearance, nevertheless, being beautiful, she is unjustly deprived of the full benefits that her beauty would have fairly won. What applies to beauty applies to other natural endowments as well. A champion athlete may not deserve the outstanding physique and agility that enable him to excel—but if he does possess these qualities, does he not deserve the victories and honor that they help him to earn? Or let us take an example that relates more directly to the connection between talent and the wealth that it brings. Certain "undeserved" natural endowments may make one farmer more skillful than another, but if as a result he raises more and better crops than his neighbor, he surely has some title to the additional wealth that this procures him.

Even clearer than the claim of talent to enjoy its natural rewards, is the claim of effort. If one farmer works for twice as many hours per day as his neighbor, he manifestly deserves the extra wealth that he gains by his double labor. Indeed, it is principally because of the efforts of individuals that the wealth of any society exists at all. It cannot simply be regarded as a kind of preexisting pie to be sliced up

*Since "sexual fulfillment" would surely be considered a primary good these days, I am surprised that Rawls did not have persons in the original position agree on a "fair" scheme for the distribution of sexual partners.

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and allotted according to some abstract scheme. (If persons in the original position conclude an agreement for distributing wealth, one would think they would also want to reach an agreement for distributing work.)

Rawls is remarkably reticent about effort. Apparently he subsumes it under the category of character: The amount of effort that a man is willing to expend, like other aspects of his character, is a product of his upbringing, and hence the result of chance. This argument not only fails to accord with the "considered judgments" of most men, but is destructive of all decent morality. If men lack all responsibility for their characters, they lack all responsibility for their actions, and it becomes impossible to distinguish between good men and evil. In seeking to correct for the "arbitrariness of the world" Rawls obliterates the most fundamental moral distinctions among men. In this respect, at least, he carries the principle of egalitarianism to its most extreme and perverse degree.

Rawls' principle for distributing wealth is unjust. More than that, *any* principle for the distribution of wealth that totally disregards the moral claims of individual talent and effort is unjust. But this does not mean that individual talent and effort are the *only* claims that may validly determine the distribution of income, or that the verdict of the market must reign supreme. The realm of property and of economics does not exist in a vacuum; it can never be wholly autonomous from the political realm. And there are invariably legitimate and compelling political reasons for pursuing policies that have the effect of altering the "natural" distribution of income. Government must necessarily concern itself with the welfare of its citizens, the maintenance of social order, and the perpetuation of its political institutions. It must therefore seek to alleviate poverty and to prevent excessive concentrations of wealth where these might prove dangerous to liberty. The economic claims of individual talent and effort must be modified by the imperatives of the public good. But to deny these claims completely and to redistribute income merely for the sake of satisfying some abstract egalitarian principle is to endanger the moral foundations of a free society.

Marc F. Plattner

The Business of America

by Richard S. Wheeler

Packard Fords the Rubicon

Lindley H. Clark Jr., the economic news editor of the Wall Street Journal, *initiated this column with four essays discussing the practice of business in America. The series attempted to bring to our readers' attention some of the problems inherent in doing business in America today. We are continuing this series now by publishing essays discussing the American condition from the perspective of individual businessmen.*

LAST FALL, David Packard administered a dose of castor oil to the Establishment, and the Establishment has been passing unseemly amounts of gas ever since. Mr. Packard, Chairman of the Board of the Hewlett-Packard Company, simply asserted in a speech to corporate donors that it is time to end no-strings gifts to higher education: too much of that hard-earned money was being used to oppose corporations and the free-market economy. The urbane Mr. Packard put more of a gloss on it, but his point was clear: Business should stop subsidizing its enemies.

The academic community was shocked, if not outraged, at this insolent challenge to its imperial power from a mere money-grubbing citizen. A pained response was not long in forthcoming. About two weeks after Packard's *lèse majesté*, the Establishment retorted, in the papal person of McGeorge Bundy, president-rex of the Ford Foundation, liberal blue blood, moderate, earnest, and terribly enlightened.

Goodness, said Bundy, that's a frightening notion that Packard had conceived. "But unless I misunderstand Mr. Packard, I must conclude that he is more wrong than right," intoned Mr. Bundy before San Francisco's Commonwealth Club, "simply because he suggests a dangerously narrow view of what is good for free enterprise. He seems to be saying that the schools . . . should be supported only to the degree that they themselves support the free-enterprise system, and I find no mention in his analysis of the kind of support that includes criticism and even opposition."

Mr. Bundy did not extend his observation to any group other than businessmen. That is, he did not elevate his beatific vision to the status of a general principle. He did not, that is, suggest that George Meany and his colleagues supply no-strings subsidies to the National Right to Work Committee on the ground that its researches would undoubtedly support unionism by helping to purge it of its follies and oppressions. Nor did he propose that political liberals settle no-strings gifts on William F. Buckley and his staff, with the hope that Mr. Buckley's researches would thereby support liberalism by purging it of its offenses against intelligence and morals. On the contrary, Mr. Bundy's prophylaxis was reserved for one group alone, the businessmen who will profit from the slings and arrows of the academy.

One suspects that Mr. Bundy's homily on the value of academic criticism is a bit disingenuous. Actual *criticism* of corporations and the market economy was, after all, the mildest and most innocuous of the activities that had mushroomed on campuses. Corporate moneys were underwriting more than criticism; they were supporting radical activism, the destruction of property, the blockage of transportation, the researches of supercharged ecological and consumerist militants, legal suits, political action against the interests of business, demagogues, and a whole army of academic housewreckers and revolutionaries. The wonder is that it took until 1973 for any corporate executive to conclude that maybe businessmen ought to be more selective with their donations.

For business to subsidize every Nadermanque on the campuses is simply masochistic. Mr. Packard had indeed suggested that a certain selectivity in gift-giving might enable business to breathe a bit more easily. Henceforth, he proposed, such freely given munificence should be directed toward research that would directly benefit the corporate giver, or schools of business from which corporations draw managerial talent, or carefully defined scholarships. Or at least not to those humanities, economics, or religion departments that would only bite the hand that feeds them. All in all, that is a position that business should have adopted years ago. The amazing thing is that corporate givers have been so forbearing for so long in the face of such provocations. The only difficulty with Mr. Packard's view is that he didn't go far enough: corporations ought to withdraw all subsidies to higher education immediately, and concentrate exclusively on scholarships.

But Mr. Bundy was grieved. He feared that Mr. Packard's "narrow" view of what is good for free enterprise would actually cause *hostility* on campus toward business, and generate a "lack of understanding" about business, and goodness sakes alive, even cause mediocrity because business would be subsidizing only its own. One can only describe the argument as quaint. But Mr. Bundy acknowledged that his very own Ford Foundation carefully controls the terms of its grants—although he hastened to add that the foundation never monitors the opinions of its grantees, of course, of course. Not that it would have to: none of its grantees has ever threatened to tear down its house or render the foundation into lard. And, we might add, it has rarely been heard of throughout Christendom that the foundation made grants fostering *laissez-faire* or other rightist heresies. One suspects, again, that Mr. Bundy was being a bit disingenuous. We can, however, praise him for his forbearance. He did not attack Mr. Packard for destroying academ-

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ic freedom root and branch, or even as an antiintellectual. But he came close, dwelling plaintively on the virtues of unfettered inquiry.

All in all, Mr. Bundy had no case. Beneath the polished, upper-Bostonian rhetoric was the gross presumption that the business community should participate in its own murder and support unquestioningly the new patrician class in America, the solons of the academy. He is quite right that inquiry is presently trammeled on campus, but that is largely because timid corporations have failed to fund the researches and politics that run counter to the Ford Foundation's orthodoxies. □

William F. Gavin

The Art of the Speechwriter

Robert Shrum, Mr. McGovern's senior speech writer, urged the inclusion of the theme, "Come home, America," in the Senator's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention. Now, Mr. Shrum said, he questions the political wisdom of such an approach.

New York Times, ***November 9, 1972***

MR. ROBERT SHRUM should be given a place in the Speechwriters' Hall of Fame. He is probably the first speechwriter who has ever publicly admitted that one of his ideas was, perhaps, not entirely useful. Speechwriting is not a field in which the virtue of humility and the readiness to admit failure or even misjudgment are conspicuous. Trying to get his material accepted by the boss and arguing with the boss' other aides who claim to know much more about rhetoric and subject matter than the writer take up most of his time and leave little room for the development of such virtues.

Added to all this is the gnawing doubt, fed by critics who see speechwriting as a rhetorical con-game played on the electorate, that he is doing something disreputable in the first place. Professional pride and a coarse Irish-American prejudice against unemployment tend to make me believe that speechwriting is a necessary and even desirable part of the political process, but it must be admitted that not everyone shares this view. The furor in the press over Vice President Ford's use of a speech drafted by White House writers is an example of the public confusion surrounding the role of the speechwriter.

To judge by media accounts, Ford mindlessly mouthed the words of sinister White House wordsmiths whose commas, semicolons, and rhetorical flourishes were taken as sacred scripture by the zombie-like victim of executive action. I must confess there have been times when I have secretly lusted for such a power over those for whom I have written speeches, but the unromantic facts of speechwriting life are, alas, quite different. Although I have no personal knowledge of the Ford incident, my hunch is that because of his heavy speaking schedule he needed a speech, had some White House writer draft one, looked it over, made some changes, added a few words, read it over a few times, and then delivered it. In short, the White House speechwriters offered this service for the simple reason that somebody has to provide a speech draft and Ford didn't have his own speechwriters at the time. If, on the other hand, it was a case of Ford playing puppet to the writers' ventriloquist, then it is a glaring exception to the general rule. The relationship between a politician and a speechwriter is something far more complicated than the popular wisdom would suggest. Most speechwriters are neither Svengalis nor Uriah Heeps. They do a personal and often exasperating—but ultimately rewarding—job for someone they not only work for but believe in, neither dominating nor grovelling before their boss.

How does one become a speechwriter? There are, thank God, no courses in Creative Speechwriting in the universities. There is no Speechwriters Union. No employment agency advertises openings in Speechwriting. In my own experience with the Nixon staff, I found myself (a former teacher) working with Bill Safire (a public relations man), Pat Buchanan and Ray Price (former editorial writers for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, respectively), Lee Huebner (a professor and one of the co-founders of the Ripon Society), and Jim Keogh (former executive editor of *Time*). Since I left the White House staff John McLaughlin, a Catholic priest, became one of the President's speechwriters. It seems clear that there is no single background or way of life from which speechwriters come.

Speechwriting, I have found, is a group process at worst and a partnership at best. A good writing team consists of a writer, a political office, a research office, and the boss. The speechwriter must be prepared to contend with and learn from the political advisors to his man, plus those experts whose guidance is necessary in writing about complex fields, e.g., farm policy, and just about everyone who has access to the man—and finally, the man himself. All of this is bad for the ego—and a writer has more than his share of self-esteem—but necessary for the job. The problem is that while few are likely to claim expertise in the field of the novel or political reporting, almost everyone connected with a political office claims to know what makes a speech work. The damnedest thing about such claims is they are not wholly wrong. A political speech is such a mystery, such an unpredictable thing, that it very often happens a semiliterate, old-time political hack will be able to smell out a rotten part of a speech draft while someone with a doctorate in English will not. Thus, a paradox: a speechwriter whose strength lies in his individuality, in his own crazy, unique way of looking at the world must at the same time not only tolerate but welcome the advice of others whose literary skills are, to put it in the mildest terms, questionable.

Perhaps a case history of one speech might serve as an example of the teamwork necessary to create a useable draft. It is not a typical case history—there is no typical case history—but it does contain enough elements of the speechwriting process to be instructive.

On this occasion, the Nixon campaign staff was in Key Biscayne for a weekend during the 1968 campaign. It was Columbus Day weekend and there were disquieting signs in the polls, not quite ominous (as they later would most definitely be), but nothing to ignore.

I got a call in my room at the Key Biscayne Hotel. Jim Keogh, head of the speechwriting team, told me we were all to meet in the lobby at one o'clock and then go to the Nixon house, about a half mile away. He didn't say what we would be doing once we got there, but it didn't matter. The boss wanted to see the writers and that was that.

We went by car to the Nixon home, where, besides the writing team of Keogh, Pat Buchanan, Ray Price, Bill Safire, and me, there were Nixon's advisors Bryce Harlow, Bob Finch, and Martin Anderson.

The candidate came into the room. He sat in a chair on the side of the room farthest from me, near the glass-paneled doors facing Biscayne Bay. He looked tan and fit. He motioned to Bryce Harlow with his hand. "Bryce, you know this but let me say it so everyone knows." He then spent the next few minutes talking about the need for a concerted effort to be made by all of us during the last three weeks of the campaign. There was to be, he said, a kind of radio blitz in which he would make a half-dozen or more radio speeches of the kind he did before the convention (Ray Price's "Black Capitalism" speech being one of the best-known and best-publicized examples).

After that, the division of labor was made. Price would handle so-and-so, Harlow would do such-and-such. The list of important topics was dwindling. Finally he said, "O.K., let's see, we have—conservation . . . Gavin can handle that." After a few more words he stopped and we all left the house.

I had an assignment. There was only one problem. I didn't know a damn thing about conservation.

I was given a deadline for my draft. We returned to the road and in one stop I locked myself in a hotel room and worked on the speech throughout the night, referring to dozens of memos and position papers and some material that was coming

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into the hotel from our New York offices over the "twix," a machine that copies documents that are transmitted by phone.

I finally came out of that room with a draft. I had snipped and cut and scotch-taped whole globs of material from the research and thus learned one of the great secrets of the speechwriter's art: how to use a pair of scissors and rolls of tape.

At this stage of the process, different techniques are used by different staffs. In the case of the conservation speech, we used the Keogh technique which means that once the original draft left my hands I never saw it again. Other staffs use different techniques. My writer's ego prefers another crack at a first draft, but Keogh's policy was reasonable.

The candidate ultimately delivered a speech quite close to my original draft. I mention this not to place undue emphasis on the quality of the draft, but to point out that a writer never really knows just how or even if his draft is going to be delivered until he hears the words coming from the mouth of the boss. Sometimes the spoken words and the words of the original draft are the same. More often than not, however, the boss will have done something different: added, deleted, expanded . . . you never know.

All of which brings me to the final point: a speechwriter has to be sensitive enough to be hurt every time his stuff isn't used, but tough enough to know that there are going to be times when some or even all of his stuff will be ignored by the boss. That is the nature of the business, and those who are not emotionally or professionally prepared to accept that fact should go into another writing field. Political speechwriting demands that the writer recognize that what he is doing is producing raw material from which another is going to pick and choose, to do with as he wants.

All in all, I suppose speechwriters can be divided into two categories: first, there is the speechwriter who puts the emphasis on "writer" as in speech***writer***. His strength is in his love of words for their own sake, for nuances and cadences and rhythms and the ability and desire to write and rewrite until the thing glows and shines. His drawbacks are that speechwriting simply doesn't allow enough time for the kind of care he wishes to give to his creations.

The second kind of speechwriter puts the emphasis on "speech" as in ***speech***writer. He knows that speechwriting isn't to be confused with poetry or ***belles lettres***, that it must stand or fall on its own peculiar rules and that the most important rule is to get the thing done in good enough shape either to be delivered to an audience or to be reworked by the boss. His strength is in his ability to see speechwriting as a partnership, to be willing to listen to others whose literary taste may be limited, but whose political savvy is priceless. His weakness lies in his inability to transmit to a political speech the kind of outside help it needs, the kind that comes only from an association with and a love of literature and language.

The ***speech***writer can grind the stuff out and most of it is pretty good; the speech***writer*** doesn't work so well on demand but comes up with phrases that are alive and jumping up and down all over the text waiting to become sounds. A lucky politician has one of each on his staff. A really lucky politician has one writer who is both.

The speechwriter must try to solve the big problem: you have to give the boss what he wants—but you also have to give him what he needs. They are not always synonymous. The second worst mistake a speechwriter can make is to begin to think that he knows better than the boss what the boss needs; the worst mistake is to give him only what he thinks he wants. □

Paul P. Somers, Jr.

Necroliberation: A Theory of Justice

ONE OF THE MOST oppressed segments of the American population today is the dead; no other group has contributed so much and received so little in return. For the extinct, segregation and blatant discrimination have been primary characteristics of American political and social life since that English settlement vanished from Roanoke Island nearly four hundred years ago.

In no state of the Union, for example, is a dead person permitted to own property, no matter how much he might have accumulated during his lifetime. ***Robbery*** is the only term for this grave crime committed by a greedy state on behalf of grasping heirs.

A full chronicle of the raped rights of the dead would fill a law library, but a few representative statutes will give some idea of the scope of these infringements. In Indiana, for example, it is unlawful to dance with a dead person. Deceased persons, referred to hereafter as DPs, may not purchase liquor by the drink in Louisiana. California forbids a DP to register at a hotel or motel. Similarly, it is illegal there for a person who is living to share a hotel or motel room with one who is not. In New Mexico, Nevada, and Connecticut, a dead one may not succeed himself to state or national elective office. Georgia will not permit a DP to play in a marching band, while in neither Florida nor New Hampshire may one who is no longer living ride in a railroad passenger car. DPs in Michigan may not massage or be massaged for pay by a member of the opposite sex. The state of New York forbids them to drive cars, but a person who becomes deceased on an underground passenger train is entitled to ride through to his stop, provided he has retained his ticket stub.

The federal government has also kept its oppressor's eye on this class of outcasts, providing prison terms for DPs found guilty of assembling in groups of five or more. Such outrages are common, with the Deadmann Act, which makes it a federal crime to transport a dead person across state lines for immoral purposes, being one of the most notorious.

"But what can *I* do?" you ask, wringing your little hands, "I, who am, after all, just one person, one atom in the manswarm?"

To begin with, we can all watch our language. How many times have you found yourself saying: "That guy's a dead ringer for my Aunt Laverne"?

Now, think how that must hurt.

Or, have you ever . . . I must admit that I have . . . have you ever been in "dead earnest?" Do you have trouble getting off "dead center?" Probing still deeper into your secret prejudices, ask yourself if you'd want your daughter to marry one.

The road of the righteous is a narrow one, and greasy water flows deep in the gutters.

Yet, it's not enough that we merely raise our own level of consciousness; we must act forcefully for positive social good. The next time you hear a mummy joke, gently remind the would-be humorist that departed denizens have rights and feelings, too. And if that doesn't work, ask him if he'd like to meet his ancestors.

There are still other, more emphatic actions, like taking a defunct one to lunch. Think how bored and hungry they must get, hanging around all the time without any rights or highs or anything. Help a DP change a tire or cross the street. A concerned woman knowing a dead lady who's been letting herself go, might give her some hair-styling tips, or show her how to apply eyeshadow.

The final stage in the struggle is, of course, political involvement; revolutions aren't won by making Johnny Carson apologize for smirking as he says: "my monologue is dying." Terminated taxpayers are exploited because they are politically powerless. And it's no wonder: without due process, their names are removed from the voter lists (except in Chicago) as soon as they die. Surely, one good court case should be sufficient to end this travesty. When the Declaration of Independence sets forth certain inalienable rights, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," it nowhere excludes the no-longer-with-us from the umbrella of its benefits. Obviously, removing the dead from the voting rolls deprives them of liberty, which is dearer than life.

While the courts are deciding this issue, other steps may be taken. DPs should refuse to relinquish their suffrage, making it plain to living kin that any effort to report their death will be resisted. If the government isn't informed of the death, it can't steal the vote. DPs as well as their living advocates should immediately begin writing to their elected officials. Just imagine the impact on a congressman who receives

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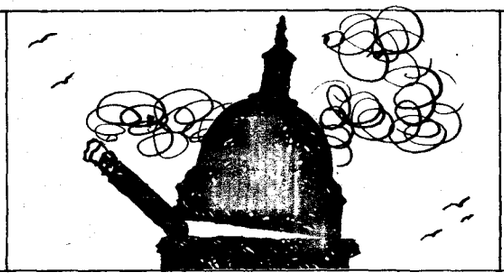
a letter from a constituent he knows to be dead. That should rattle his filibuster.

Activists should organize a Deceased Citizens' League, named, perhaps, The Dead Hand, to dramatize the political plight of the discontinued, to point out, for instance, such abuses as requiring job applicants to submit to a physical examination. Such tests are obviously discriminatory, catering as they do to the peculiar abilities of the living. Perhaps employers might be induced to accept an autopsy instead of the conventional physical. At any rate, pressure must be exerted on all employers to hire the inanimate.

This coordinated political activity should build to a crescendo, a cataclysmic climax of activism, specifically: the Dead Persons' March on Washington. Just think of it! Ten thousand posthumous patriots wading in the Reflecting Pool! Not even a federal marshall could bust George Washington or Robert Frost or General Grant. □

Letter from a Whig



by C. Bascom Slemp

Congressional Reorganization

(WASHINGTON)—In a letter to his colleagues, a GOP congressman recently wrote: "There are some Democrats who are stating that the President has lost the confidence of the people and should resign. Quite clearly, if that is so, the congressional member himself should do likewise." This statement was prompted by two recent public opinion polls. In a Sindlinger Company poll Congress received a positive rating of only 25.7 percent (2.1 percent excellent, 23 percent good), as compared to a negative rating of 69 percent (47 percent fair, 22 percent poor, and 4.8 percent no opinion). Similarly, a poll by Louis Harris revealed a negative rating of 69 percent for Congress, as compared to a positive rating of 21 percent, and 10 percent not sure. When the public was asked to rate Congress in specific areas (including its handling of Watergate, impeachment, the economy, energy, and inspiring confidence in government) the results were even more negative, ranging from 72 to 88 percent.

The results of these polls serve to illustrate that if Watergate has eroded the stature of the Presidency, Congress' continuing inertia and unwillingness to assert itself has also threatened the Constitutional Trinity.

In 1946 Congress undertook its first major effort in reorganization. This resulted in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Less than two decades later (1965), Congress found it necessary once again to initiate reform proceedings. And again, in 1970, a legislative reorganization was passed. But despite these various reorganizations Congress has still found itself incapable of dealing with some of its most basic tasks, including the raising and spending of the tax dollar and now the energy crisis. Thus, the question has once again arisen, what can Congress do? (Reorganize, of course!)

A special committee, known as the Select committee on Committees (under the chairmanship of Missouri Democrat, Richard Bolling), has recently come up with a proposal to structurally reorganize the present 21 standing and 125 subcommittees of the House of Representatives. That some reorganization is needed is a point that finds no contention in Congress. Overlapping jurisdiction has consistently handicapped and delayed the passage of legislation. To illustrate the point. During the Ninety-second Congress over 350 bills and 30 resolutions covering the entire spectrum of fuels and energy-related issues were introduced, but no legislation came to the floor of the House for consideration. Thus far in the Ninety-third Congress, six Senate, six House, and a number of joint committees have conducted a wide variety of hearings on energy problems. But to date only fuel allocation and conservation measures (with the possible exception of the Alaskan pipeline bill) have been decided upon.

Illustrative of committee jurisdictional problems is legislation which would facilitate the construction of oil superports. Three House committees (Interior, Public Works, and Merchant Marine and Fisheries) held hearings on the subject of oil superports. Merchant Marine and Fisheries and Interior were able to come to agreement on a common bill, but Public Works would not compromise. As a result both committees passed bills, but the House Committee on Rules (unwilling to antagonize either committee) has refused to grant a rule for either committee's bill. The legislation can consequently not come before the House of Representatives for consideration.

The Bolling Committee's recommendations are the culmination of one year of hearings and debate. The committee has proposed reducing the number of standing House committes by exactly one, although three committees would be abolished (Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Internal Security, and Post Office and Civil Service). Nevertheless, the committee's recommendations are significant.

The major revisions in committee jurisdictional assignments would be to curtail the all-powerful czarship of Ways and Means Committee Chairman, Wilbur Mills. Mills has had almost total control over all economic-related legislation, including health insurance, foreign trade, and taxation. Under the Bolling proposal Ways and Means would lose its jurisdiction over foreign trade (which would go to the Foreign Affairs Committee) and health insurance (which would go to a new committee on Commerce and Health). The House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs would be redesignated the Committee on Energy and Environment and it would assume the authority for most of the legislation in those two areas. Another change would be to divide the Education and Labor Committee into two committees. This has been one committee which has been dominated by liberal congressmen, but one which has also perennially failed to attract conservative members because of a "graveyard syndrome."

Other changes would include reorganizing the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and renaming it the Commerce and Health Committee. Again, this committee would assume the jurisdiction implied in the name and lose its energy, transportation, and environmental role. The Public Works Committee would be renamed the Public Works and Transportation Committee. In addition to its present responsibility for the Highway Trust Fund, the Public Works Committee would also assume responsibility for mass transit (currently with Banking and Currency), railway transportation, and civil aviation (currently with Commerce), as well as most of the responsibilities now held by Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (the newest of the twenty-one standing committees) would assume responsibility for elections and campaign finance. The areas for the committees on Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and Government Operations would also be expanded. House members would like to see the House Foreign Affairs Committee raised to the prominence of its Senate counterpart and the reorganizational proposal represents an effort to accomplish that goal. The Government Operations Committee would also gain high visibility by incorporating the responsibilities now held by Post Office and Civil Service.

Needless to say, the curtailment of fiefdoms and empires produced an outcry from the chairmen who would be stripped of their all-powerful roles. Wilbur Mills argued that the separation of taxes from benefits would "lead to potentially disastrous consequences, both for the beneficiaries and for responsible fiscal policy." (Although there hasn't been much of the latter lately.) Mills also argued that much of the jurisdictional reshuffling could result

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in Congress' inability to initiate certain kinds of legislation.

For many, in contrast, the structural reforms of the committees do not go far enough. These critics argue that the "supercommittees" (Ways and Means, Rules, and Appropriations) still retain far too much power. Others, however, believe that if the Bolling proposals are accepted by the House of Representatives (and that still remains questionable) an era of post-war congressional giants will come to an end.

Other perennial reform issues in Congress have been the seniority system and committee secrecy. The seniority system has already seen major modifications during the last two sessions of Congress. House Republicans, for example, select their ranking minority members by secret ballot on each nominee submitted by its committee on committees. The House Democrats also now permit the Party Caucus to consider separately each recommendation by their committee on committees. Theretofore it could only be done en bloc. A secret vote on any chairman can also be obtained at the request of ten members.

After the Reorganization Act of 1970, the House of Representatives authorized radio and television coverage of House committee hearings. The Act also required the publication of all committee roll-call votes. It further provided that all committee hearings would be open to the public, "except when the committee by majority vote determines otherwise."

In March of 1973 secret committee meetings were further curtailed when Congress adopted H.R. 259. This resolution provided that all committee hearings be open to the public unless a majority of the members voted to close a session because of national security, or the possible defamation of character. Such a majority vote required that a quorum be present and that a roll-call vote would be taken. As a result of this legislation almost 80 percent of all committee hearings were held in public in 1973. But not all committees have abided by the resolution. The Appropriations Committee reported nineteen meetings, but only one was open to the public, and the House Ways and Means Committee held forty closed and twenty-four open meetings. The House Committee on Administration was apparently extensively involved in matters of national security and defamation of character because it held eighteen meetings, none of which were open to the public, and it took no votes to close its sessions. Structural reform in itself can consequently accomplish little. As a result Sidney Scheuer, the Chairman of the National Committee for an Effective Congress, has argued that institutional changes notwithstanding: "The answer to our political crisis depends on the quality of the individuals who make up the legislative branch."

Similarly, political commentator Elizabeth Drew has charged that regardless of how Congress may talk in its orotund fashion, it has lacked the seriousness of intent necessary to assert its constitutional responsibilities: "Congressional oversight of the executive is a function that is clearly within the grasp of Congress. It does not call for collective action. It does not require heroism. It does not even demand determined nibbling at a dragon. It does demand an interest in doing the job, and in making the appropriate arrangements. But the Congress has a curious disinclination to do so."

If public whim is to be the barometer for determining the course of political action, if we are to go the course of Fourth Republic France with Mr. Nixon, then the Congress (controlled by the Democrats as it is) must set the same standard for itself. And if that is to be the case, come election time there can be only one course of action, and that is to throw the "buggers" out. □

Stephen R. Maloney

Streaking: A Revisionist View

THE TWENTY-TWO thousand students at the University of Georgia are basically a conservative group. The few resident radicals occasionally agonize that UGA students fall below national norms in such essential aspects of the collegiate *Zeitgeist* as : organizing civil rights marches; shouting down conservative speakers; favoring abortion on demand; disbelieving in God; advocating amnesty for all; participating in group sex; and voting for George McGovern. The strongest and best organized group on campus, in fact, is not Gay Liberation but Campus Crusade for Christ.

So, you might ask, how on God's green earth did the University of Georgia become the Streaking Capital of the Western World? (In the popular mind, of course, Georgia is not number one in anything, save the number of obese deputy sheriffs and the production of moonshine whiskey.) But all that is "changed, changed utterly," as Yeats said in "Easter 1916," his poem about the great transformation brought about in the Irish people by the Easter Rebellion.

On Thursday, March 7, 1974, Georgia earned a paragraph (well, maybe a footnote) in the Handbook of College Madness. Blessed with a balmy climate, this state often witnesses an early advent of what William F. Buckley, Jr. calls the "silly season"—spring. Warm weather and the reports of the decriminalization of exhibitionism in other places had brought out local streakers. Almost exclusively males, they gathered in groups of two or three, donned their ski masks (every such object in this snowless state has now been sold, my informants claim), raced around, and titillated the locals. But Thursday was something else.

After some nasty incidents on previous days (tear gas and mace used by the Athens police on spectators, rocks and beer bottles used by spectators on the police), the university administration capitulated. For one day (March 7) the campus would serve as a sanctuary for streakers. (Our administrators have learned the essential lesson of survival: talk tough and then give up.) Excitement rose on the campus. Posters went up all over town encouraging students to break the national record, which was assessed rather arbitrarily as 500 streakers—the number that had cavorted earlier in the week at the University of South Carolina.

Now Athens is a nice, sleepy Southern university town. George F. Babbitt would love it here; he would probably be elected mayor. The present mayor did not approve of streaking, although he has managed to suffer the existence of several locally famous brothels for decades. (They, like the illegal liquor establishments that flourished before the city went wet, are good for business.) Well, the mayor issued various public statements, the essence of which was, "Oh woe is us." Classical and Christian society was doomed, he indicated. Other opponents of the Big Streak came out. James "Sloppy" Floyd, a Georgia state legislator, spoke in the great tradition of Senator Claghorn: "Even if we have to expell a thousand students at the University of Georgia to get rid of this, we should do it." And then he added the immortal words: "We're just sitting idly by and letting this ridiculous thing go on. Somebody needs to bring us back to our senses and stop this cock-eyed thing." Oh Freud, wouldst thou were living now and still compiling thy catalogues.

After another big University of South Carolina "streak," their president showed that he could use words as sloppily as Representative Floyd: "It is time for the exhibitionist students and their cheering supporters of thousands to lay aside this flaunting of modesty and return to acceptable values." Presumably these acceptable values do not include a proper reverence for the English language. Hughes Rudd of CBS news chided streakers, albeit more literately, predicting that thumb-sucking would be big in 1976. The Black Student Union at Georgia, which had been doing its own things, like disrupting a speech by Nobel Prize winner William Schockley, found streakers to be bad nudes. One leader of the BSU pronounced streaking a "conspiracy" to distract people from the grievances of blacks.

About this time I decided there must be something essentially healthy about streaking. After all, with all the boobs against it, the phenomenon could not be all bad. The final step in my conversion came when a dear, hard-working lady at the university spoke to me confidentially. She

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is a liberal. She not only reads the *Nation* magazine cover to cover but *believes* what she reads. Being a liberal she is, of course, *for* almost everything—even for me, whom she regards as a nice young man corrupted by bad reading material. She said that while she approved of streaking, she hoped the phenomenon would not divert the students from the serious issues. By which she meant the presidential campaign of Ted Kennedy, war, racism, poverty, the lettuce boycott.

Streaking, I then realized, may be a lot of things, including infantile regression. But it is also, praise the 1970s, a protest against the Serious Issues of Our Time. The sociologists and psychologists will banalize the phenomenon, trying to breathe the stale vapors of High Seriousness into it ("a protest against a conformist society"), Madison Avenue will commercialize it (Streaker Ski-Masks from Pucci), athletic departments may institutionalize it ("Join the Streaking Squad"). But none of them will ever be able to kill the splendor of multitudes of people finding joy in running naked through the grass and thumbing their nose at the serious issues.

I went to the March 7 streak. So did 15,000 other spectators (police estimate). So did 50,000 beer cans (my estimate after surveying the scene the next morning). A few dozen people went streaking around for an hour or so before the mass gathering in one of the dormitory quadrangles. Yes, there were some professional exhibitionists and perverts. Yes, yes, yes. But, like the poor, *they* are always with us anyway, Ultimate Streak or no.

As I said earlier, Georgia is a conservative campus. I expected that all the publicity, coupled with the insistencies of the moment, abetted by great quantities of beer, would produce perhaps 100 streakers. I was wrong.

At precisely 11:00 P.M. the cheering started (it didn't stop until 3:00 A.M.). The first streakers appeared, running hard, not realizing perhaps that they had a half-mile to go. And then they came in waves. The crowd surged forward, allowing streakers to go through two-by-two, like Noah's Ark, I thought. Hundreds of naked people were going by. And then, *mirabile dictu*, one of the tightly packed crowd of watchers turned around and pointed out that an equally large number of streakers was bypassing the main body of spectators and running behind the crowd. There were streakers masked and unmasked, streakers on bicycles and motorcycles, couples ("odd" and "straight"), even a blond girl on a white horse. Streakers poured by for perhaps fifteen minutes, greeted by a roar from the spectators (many of whom stripped and joined in) that was almost gladitorial.

The campus police estimated slightly over 1,000 streakers, although the Student Government claimed 1,500; my own guess is closer to the latter's. Counting late arrivals and free-lancers, perhaps 10 percent of the student body (bodies?) streaked at Georgia that night. About 90–100 were females.

A few observations. Streaking is a fad that will prove as ephemeral as any other. Hair today, gone tomorrow. It is also, in the mass form, a surprisingly asexual event. One can leer at the girls in *Playboy* or the boys in *Playgirl*, each to his own, but not at a coed flying by. Moreover, with hundreds of naked bodies in full flight around one there is a *momentary* moral reconstruction. It may be that those who remain fully clothed are the ones who feel slightly embarrassed. Moreover, I detect very little outrage on the part of the supposedly uptight older generation. Even Lester Maddox, who was "streaked" when he came to speak at Georgia found it humorous; he said his generation hadn't indulged in the activity because they "didn't have as much to offer." Former University of Georgia Dean of Men, William Tate, a strong Southern traditionalist (he once said he got nervous every time he saw a Yankee light a match in Atlanta) provided a historical basis for streaking. The first one he saw at Georgia was in 1921, a hapless fraternity pledge fulfilling a command from the "brothers."

I doubt if streaking will prove as popular in the North as it has in the South. (Eat your hearts out New Hampshire.) Not only the weather but the political climate as well is all wrong. Campuses where people worry about the serious issues, where the dominant expression is a frown, where students actually wear "Impeach Nixon" buttons, will recognize "streaking" for what it is: a harmless activity that uses up excess time and energy. They will see that it distracts one's attention from, say, the Farah Pants Company. Streakers will reply (the bareassed to the harassed), "Join us. You have nothing to lose but your Farahs." Or, alternatively, "On streak. Join us." Alas, I fear not. One cannot be a streaker and at the same time carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. (I know, some gentlemen streakers have managed to carry the weight of lady streakers, but that is not the same thing.)

The opponents of streaking—a strange assortment of fuddy-duddies and liberals-with-a-cause—are really descendants of the puritan Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Malvolio is continually reproving the wastrels, Sirs Andrew Aguecheek and Toby Belch, for their frivolity. Finally, Sir Toby turns on Malvolio, steward of the house, and asks: "Cause thou art virtuous dost thou think there will be no more cakes and ale?" Ale, as all streakers know, is a marvelous lubricant for this nonlubricious form of nudity. □

Book Review

Myth, Man, and Statesman

John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times

by Michael A. Guhin
Columbia University $12.95

The Devil and John Foster Dulles

by Townsend Hoopes
Atlantic Little Brown $15.00

IN THEIR RECENT books on John Foster Dulles, Michael Guhin and Townsend Hoopes have illustrated once again the perennial hardihood of a great puzzle for historians and especially for biographers: to what extent is an individual representative of his times? To what extent the molder of them? Which characteristic, that of representative or molder, makes him more important to the historian? The ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in the questions have manifestly troubled evaluations of John Foster Dulles and his influence on American foreign policy in the years since 1952. That Dulles did profoundly influence the tenor and course of American policy is agreed, but whether that influence was for good or for ill, whether Dulles determined policy in his time and fixed it for his successors or merely participated in and contributed to its development is hotly disputed.

Even to his contemporaries, Dulles seemed almost larger than life, one of those rare people who may have so imprinted his times as to have influenced a succeeding era. His prestige and power within the Eisenhower Administration reached truly mythic proportions, and the force of his rhetoric carried him to the front of national and international attention time and again as he addressed the issues and problems of American foreign relations in a time of challenge still unfamiliar to Americans schooled in the rhetorical traditions of isolationism. After twenty years many of his phrases retain the power to summon images of conflict and consensus, the fantasies and realities of the middle and most intense era of Cold War.

For all his past prominence, John Foster Dulles is no easy man to rediscover, a fact which reflects in substantial part the confusion in arguments over recent American foreign relations as it does the undeniable importance of a writer's own prescriptive convictions about recent policy. The "new look," "massive retaliation," promises of "liberation" and "rollback," the "domino theory," "more bang for the buck," and more—the catch phrases of Dulles' oratory became the clichés of his era, building blocks out of which myth was constructed and the real Dulles, as well as the nature of American foreign policy, concealed from view as by a wall. (Guhin begins his study with a chapter entitled "In Search of John

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Foster Dulles.") Dulles' own characteristics present a further obstacle to analysis because of the superficial consonance between Dulles' background, connections, and training and the stereotype of mediocre American diplomatic officials. A lawyer, a lay churchman of prominence, a WASP, an "old boy" by virtue of family, education, and professional associations, Dulles apparently fit ideally into the mold of moralistic, legalistic, strong-headed but narrow-minded American diplomats, except that he was probably more intelligent and more influential than most such American diplomats.

Guhin and Hoopes, both with extensive research into the manuscript and oral-history collections of Dulles and his associates, have arrived at significantly different appreciations of Dulles as a man, a diplomat, and a secretary of state. Guhin minimized the effects of Dulles' family life and religious training and beliefs, and continues Louis Gerson's earlier attempts to "demythologize" Dulles.* Contrary to the stereotypes of Dulles and of American diplomatic defects, Dulles in Guhin's view was antilegalistic, eminently realistic in understanding the nature and uses of power, only moderately religious and a liberal at that, little influenced by moralism in his practice of international relations, and underneath the generalities of his public statements a shrewd and thoroughly professional diplomat. In sum, as Guhin proclaims in his title, Dulles was a statesman.

In contrast, Hoopes considers Dulles intensely moralistic, rigid in mind and precept, cynical rather than realistic, and completely bound up in lawyer-like modes of thought, expression, style, and personality. Hoopes judges Dulles' professionalism in diplomacy as merely a tactical skill, for Dulles had no long view of policy which would qualify him as a statesman. Dulles exaggerated the communist menace deliberately to frighten the American people into a frenzied and rigid Cold War posture. He missed a series of opportunities from 1954 to 1957 which might have led to normal relations with mainland China. Dulles mismanaged relations with American allies, alienated friends with supercilious arrogance and gratuitous lectures, and convinced communist powers that they and the United States were locked in a death struggle. Because Dulles missed potential turning points towards better relations with American competitors and enemies, because the force of Dulles' rhetoric and the shape of his strategic policies lived beyond his time, and because some long-term problems surfaced during his secretaryship but found no resolution, Hoopes regards the legacy of John Foster Dulles, especially in Vietnam and the Middle East, as pernicious.

Guhin has tried to analyze Dulles' policies, ideas, and in political science jargon his operational codes, rather than to judge Dulles in either political or moral terms. In this limited task, he has accomplished much. Guhin's book successfully conveys both understanding and respect for Dulles' principles of life and axioms of politics. An especially important point of Guhin's analysis is his emphasis on the limitations under which Dulles had to conduct his business—the constraints of public and even more of congressional opinion which constantly foreclosed alternatives in such matters as the normalization of relations with mainland China. It is unfortunate that Guhin never quite explains why he thinks Dulles a statesman, and that his book remains more expository than conclusive in analysis.

For adequate treatment of Dulles' early and formative years, and especially for a full, almost living word portrait of the personality and character of John Foster Dulles, one must turn to Hoopes. Here the best qualities of Hoopes' book are on display—the fine prose style, lively wit, and the informed manner that perhaps comes only from having been on the inside for a number of years (Hoopes is a former State Department officer). At the same time, the worst qualities of the book appear, for in his portrait of Dulles his almost vindictive hatred of the man is clear. Hoopes becomes the victim of his own literary skill in some passages where he is drawn into overly shallow judgment—analogy by the rush of a phrase. Example: "in what may have been his first application of brinkmanship, Dulles skipped the last several questions on the bar exam in Rochester in order to catch an afternoon train back to Auburn for a dinner date with Janet. His calculation, which proved correct, was that he had already written enough to pass."

Perhaps the greatest weakness in Hoopes' account is reflected in the sparse bibliography. Hoopes does not seem to know as much as he should about pre-Dulles and extra-American developments in such cases as the emergence of the Diem regime in Vietnam or the development of Sino-American relations in the early years of the People's Republic, nor does he take into account at all the constraints on Dulles' freedom of action. It is tempting, perhaps, to substitute immersion in the Dulles papers and in the oral-history interviews for sufficiently wide reading of secondary material, but when so much has been written on a world's diplomatic problems in a difficult decade, it is not an adequate method.

Neither is it adequate to explain the institutionalization of the Cold War in the middle fifties as a function of Dulles' personality, of his limitations in vision, or of his peculiar conviction that monolithic world communism was the Antichrist. In rolling phrases Hoopes denounces Dulles for constructing American alliance systems ringing the Soviet Union and China, deploying a million American servicemen overseas in a "vast formation of unprecedented imperial power," a system that could be justified only by the construction of a powerful anticommunist rationale in which Americans grew accustomed to elevating "every issue of foreign policy to the level of deadly clash between opposed moral absolutes." Hoopes concludes that such an achievement testified more than adequately to Dulles' lack of foresight and to a lack of will to construct more durable, less morally and practically precarious institutions, a conclusion that is long on hindsight, but short on insight. The predominance of hindsight in Hoopes' book, concerned as it is with the route to Vietnam, is its most serious flaw as history. It is possible—though it should not be—to read this book and still know far too little of what was happening to the foreign relations of the United States, producing the apprehensions and actuating the behavior which Hoopes describes.

Dulles became secretary of state at the climax of a long process during which America had moved to the forefront of international society. In the era of Vietnam, when it has become easy to embrace the idea that the United States has succumbed to the "arrogance of power," important aspects of that historic development have been overlooked. American foreign relations have been characterized far more by a diplomacy of insecurity than a diplomacy of arrogance, at least in relations with the major powers of Europe and the Orient.

Newly found power, a new role in international relations, from the earliest part of the century brought with it not only novel privileges and responsibilities, but unprecedented risks. Two primary factors had combined to produce the notable and "free" security which the United States enjoyed throughout the nineteenth century. The first, as everyone knows, was the British fleet, interposed between the United States and the scheming monarchies of old Europe. The second factor was the narrow definition of American interest, with only modest power in support, which meant that European states could safely relegate the United States to the periphery of interest or concern.

As long as the United States moderated its definitions of national interest and behaved with restraint, it faced few risks in foreign relations. With the turn of the century, of course, not just one but both of the major factors underlying American security altered. The foremost diplomatic problem for the United States in the twentieth century became the acquisition of reasonable security in an age when British power had diminished, when concurrently American power and interests had grown large enough to invite competition and conflict in relations with other powers.

In one very important sense, American flirtations with Wilsonian, and later Rooseveltian, internationalism were attempts to restore primary responsibility for American security to the community of powers. Americans who favored the League of Nations hoped, and probably believed, that the threat of communal force in Article X would suffice to deter aggressors, and that consequently it would never have to be carried to the point of major conflict. Similar expectation and optimism surrounded the creation of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War, though it was a more complex time in American policy because there were contradictory strains of internationalism which would exert great influence on the development of American policy in the first decade after World War II.

In the first variety of internationalism, the classic formula, Americans sought peace through international organization. That is an important point. The United Nations like the League before it was primarily to be a peace-keeping organization, not a humanitarian or liberalizing agency. Americans in 1945 favored a United Nations because they thought they had learned during the last stages of a second

*Louis L. Gerson, *John Foster Dulles*, Cooper Square, New York, 1967.

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world war that they could not stay secure and at peace on their own. Further, it seemed clear in 1944–1945 that the League had failed not because it had been a bad idea, but because Americans had shirked their responsibility for world order and mistakenly had attempted to provide for their own security irrespective of what happened to the other great powers.

The second variety of American internationalism after the Second World War related inversely to the first, although the two varieties have often been confused. In one variety of internationalism Americans sought peace and security through international organization; in the other they met newly accepted "responsibilities" for world order and progress by expanding the realm of national interest and of national action. Because this latter variety of internationalism superseded the first variety and became the fundamental element of American ColdWar policies under Dulles, it is especially important to explicate.

In the first flush of victory and leadership at war's end, Americans looked optimistically to the infant United Nations as a guarantor of peace. It was profoundly unsettling when that organization demonstrated almost immediately that it was far from capable of ensuring American security in the postwar world. Within the space of two years, the United Nations had shown itself unable to deal with major elements of developing American security needs. The Soviets violated the Yalta agreement and consolidated their expansion into Eastern Europe, apparently immune to the influence of the world organization. Simultaneously, the United Nations proved inadequate, if not incompetent, to deal with the controversial and terrifying problems surrounding the atomic energy issue. Finally, in the public forum provided by the United Nations, the intransigence and cynical hostility of Soviet leaders seemed to be confirmed beyond doubt.

By 1947 Americans saw little choice. If the international organization could not keep peace and order, the United States would have to do it. The Greek-Turkish aid bill, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan were much more than statements of American hostility to the Soviet Union and international communism. They were the practical enunciation of a loss of faith in international organization for peacekeeping. Lost faith turned to a kind of existentialism—to a concern for the challenges and needs of the moment—when Soviet expansion continued in the latter forties in Czechoslovakia.

The course of events in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin crisis a year later moved the United States a significant step further from its earlier optimistic confidence in international organization for peacekeeping. Amid overwhelming evidence that American security was diminishing and that the United Nations was powerless to halt the trend, Americans devised an alternative organization, one with less pretension to serving the needs of universal peace, but with more point for the American circumstance. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was a regional military alliance, a mutual defense pact designed to provide the United States and its friends on the fringes of Soviet Russia and Sovietized Central Europe with the security they sought but could not find in the United Nations.

Unhappily, the diminution of American security accelerated rather than halted. In quick succession, only shortly after the formation of NATO, the United States lost its atomic monopoly and then "lost" China, the first loss undeniably the result of espionage and subversion, and the second uncomfortably tinged, as Americans saw it for a time, with incompetence and perhaps treason. In five short years Americans had slid from the pinnacle of national and in fact international power to a deep insecurity unparalleled in their national history. It is small wonder that they were willing to listen to anyone—even to a McCarthy—who claimed to have an explanation and a solution for the security problem.

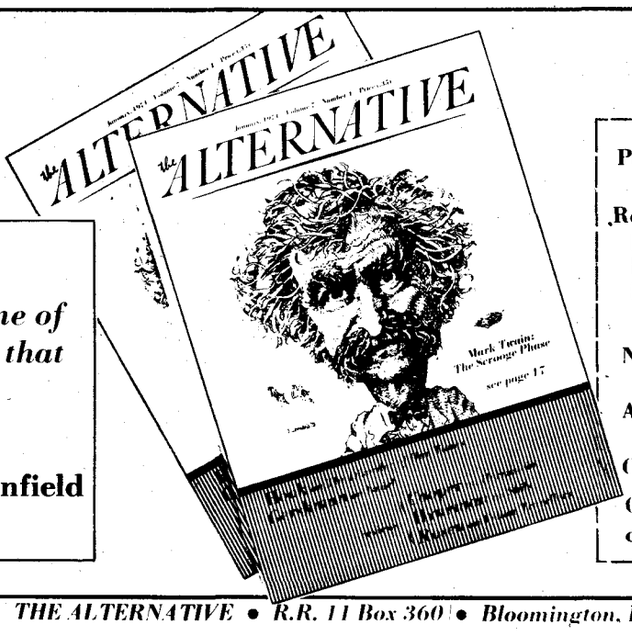
There was, of course, scarcely an interval before war erupted in Korea, an event which brought still further evolution in American postwar security policy. The Korean War confirmed the worst American suspicions about communist intentions and preferred tactics. Perhaps more important, it demonstrated that even a NATO was inadequate to provide for American needs in a world of incredible instability and hostility. NATO could augment American security only in one part of the world, and as it happened, not even in the part of the world where armed conflict was most imminent. Americans would, it seemed, have to rely on themselves. They would have to provide for their own security.

That lesson was prominent in the time when Dulles became secretary of state, and it created subtle but extremely important differences in the ways in which Dulles continued the policies of the Truman Administration. It is true, as Hoopes and many others note, that Dulles and Eisenhower carried on with containment. But the alliance systems built by Dulles—SEATO and CENTO—were not analogues to NATO. There were in SEATO and CENTO no mutual pledges, no clauses in which member states promised their aid and support to the United States in its potential need. The later pacts recognized at least implicitly the new American realization that defense of interests and the maintenance of security depended on no other state or combination of states. In SEATO and CENTO, the United States acknowledged that in some circumstances defense of member states could become its moral duty or practical interest, but that there was little the member states could contribute to American needs.

Soon after Dulles came to office, while Americans were still struggling to find splendor in loneliness, pride in self-reliance, two more events shattered whatever composure and confidence remained. With another generation of spies and an incredible surge of development the Soviets first exploded a hydrogen device and then lofted a Sputnik. At the very moment when Americans were assimilating the unwelcome knowledge that they would have to "go it alone," they faced world-exciting, mind-boggling demonstrations of the enemies' power and strategic superiority. Never had the United States been so insecure, never so bare of protection from terrible destruction. What was to be done?→

The Alternative is one of the few magazines that I read regularly.

—Edward C. Banfield



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Hoopes and Guhin both fail to convey a sense of that unstable and frightening era in American foreign relations, and it is an enormous failure. Every reader needs to have Dulles' era placed in a larger context, not just as to consequence or subsequence, but as to antecedents. The absence of such a context leaves the authors unable to explain important aspects of Dulles' motivations. Dulles, like other Americans, perhaps more than many other Americans, was surely influenced by the development of massive insecurity and the conviction that things were getting worse.

To be sure, the United States in Dulles' time was striving to be a great power rather than a great society. Indeed, in the strategic terms of the middle fifties, the United States was attempting to maintain its position as the *greatest* power, for only in that position did the prospect of tolerable relative security lie. The strategy of deterrence via equivalent power was at least two decades in the future, and has not been fully accepted as policy even in mid-1974. By its postwar experience, the United States had become inclined to denigrate international organization and to favor self-reliance, a proposition that certainly led to behavior and style that have mistakenly been described as the "arrogance of power." And perhaps postwar losses of security had introduced a modest paranoia into American approaches to foreign relations.

But it is difficult to argue that any or all of these elements of American policy and style were attributable to John Foster Dulles. Dulles' personality did affect American policy in the Eisenhower years, but not so fundamentally. It was important that Dulles identified defense and security problems as paramount. Likewise significant, Dulles preferred action over inaction, and there is no doubt that he moved at times without sufficient reflection, planning, or coordination. The critical insecurity of the mid-fifties was too frustrating to tolerate, but it was for a time beyond his power to alter in conclusive strategic terms. It was better to build fallout shelters and promote civil defense, even in the knowledge that such measures could hardly avail most of the nation's population, far better than to sit in frustrated paralysis for the several years it would take the United States to close that first "missile gap."

Dulles was realist enough or, one might insist, cynic enough to place more confidence in the exercise of power and the use of threats than in the arts of persuasion. Someone once said of Dulles that he was a bull who carried his own china shop around with him. But it was not arrogance or bluster or brash brinkmanship that contributed this character to Dulles' diplomacy. It was evidence of Dulles' intellectual habit of simplifying problems, of penetrating to the heart of issues and defining alternatives clearly even at the risk of oversimplification. It was also a manifestation of his conviction that the American diplomatic situation could hardly be worse, except perhaps in a time of general war. Though not formally at war, the United States had been sustaining huge losses, and the prevention of further erosions of American security required Americans to be vigilant, energetic in endeavor, unified in spirit.

It was no easy task to bring the American people to such unity of conviction and purpose or even to convince them of urgency and perhaps of a need for sacrifice and dedication in the national interest. If Dulles could help it, there would be no American confused or in doubt as to who were enemies of the United States, as to what those enemies intended, and as to the serious threat such enemies posed in an era of dramatized insecurity. As Hoopes emphasizes and Guhin acknowledges, Dulles was ready to exaggerate and stereotype the enemy—to distill complex cross currents of conflicting national interests and ideologies into clear-cut challenges and choices—if such tactics would awaken Americans to the risks and duties of American foreign relations in the mid-fifties. Thus it was not moralism but appreciation for the psychic element of struggle that brought Dulles to employ a rhetoric of confrontation.

There is much wisdom in one of Dulles' own observations on diplomacy. Dulles thought it an error to believe that the foreign policy of any state was "due to the personal views and idiosyncracies of some . . . politician who may have temporarily secured an ascendance over his fellows." True, Dulles and Eisenhower left precedents and problems to their successors. But to blame Dulles for the fundamental principles, policies, and problems of the Cold War since 1952 perilously approaches promulgation of a "devil theory" as foolish and simplistic as that ascribed to Dulles in his combat with world communism. Dulles was not the devil, and the United States has not gone to hell because of what Dulles did or failed to do. Nor has the world gone to hell because of American policies in the Cold War.

The hope of the present generation rests on strategic principles and diplomatic styles other than those of the Dulles years, which is not necessarily an indictment of Dulles. It would be an indictment of us if we had not progressed beyond the plans and understandings of the previous generation, for Dulles anticipated a different future than we do, just as he lived through a different past and confronted a different present. To complain because the previous generation did not resolve the problems we must face in our time is, after all, only to testify to the passing of one generation and the immaturity of another.

Thomas H. Etzold

Book Review

Myself When Young

Growing Up in the 1890s

by Arthur Krock
Little, Brown $6.95

ARTHUR KROCK, AN older American for freedom, retired some years ago at the age of seventy-eight as the Washington "In the Nation" columnist of the *New York Times*, but, bidding his sometimes faltering heart to take it easy, he still goes downtown to his old office for part of each day. His business: writing nostalgically of a time in the United States that knew not the philosophy of those who succeeded him in the *Times* Washington Bureau. Arthur, always a combination of indulgent affection and acidulous objectivity, expects very little of politicians, which is a sensible American attitude. He respects the Scotty Restons and the Turner Catledges who grew up under his tutelage in the Washington Bureau for their reportorical capacities, but obviously thinks they never quite understood the genius of the traditional American republic, which once took it as gospel that the people should support the government, not vice versa.

I have long marvelled at Arthur Krock for his ability to live in Washington (working for the Haldeman papers of Louisville, Kentucky, from 1910 to 1915 and for the *New York Times* from 1932 to 1966) without ever showing a single symptom of Potomac fever. I first knew him in New York City at the end of the twenties when he jumped from a doomed *New York World* to write editorials for the *Times*. He used to drop in at the small offices of the *Times Sunday Book Review* to tell of the delights of working in Manhattan, where mingling with prize fighters—Harry Greb, Gene Tunney—was much to be preferred to his former career of hobnobbing over bourbon with politicians. Arthur Krock despised Washington at the time, and it was no secret that he would have preferred to remain in the home office of his newspaper for the rest of his working life. When it came to a big reshuffle in the Depression decade, however, the *Times* high command made Charles Merz, Krock's colleague on the old *World*, chief of the editorial page, and sent Arthur off to Washington to head a bureau which, with the sudden ladling out of all that New Deal alphabet soup, had taken a light-year leap in importance. It was by no means a matter of being kicked upstairs. The Washington news was soon flowing in such volume that the *Times*, in spite of itself, took on all the trappings of a national newspaper. And Arthur Krock, with his inside track to such knowledgeable friends as old Joe Kennedy, began getting

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his mysterious beats that made him as feared as he was respected. On two separate occasions Franklin D. Roosevelt, who hated Arthur's "hooks and barbs," tried to get him fired. Krock made Steve Early, the President's press secretary, miserable on more than one occasion, but Arthur Sulzberger, with a grit that was unexpected in a son-in-law successor to the job of publisher, stood by his Washington man even though the editorial page stance in New York and Krock's "In the Nation" columns from the capital often diverged at ninety-degree angles.

The good reporters (Catledge, Reston) who had worked for Krock in New and Fair Deal times became the bad theoreticians of a later era (how *do* you beat the *Zeitgeist*?), and they were destined to get a hurts-me-more-than-it hurts-you spanking in Arthur's memoiristic writing. The nice thing about Arthur Krock is that he can't hate his old friends even when they are backsliders from a most obvious common sense. Arthur himself was saved from backsliding by virtue of his roots in an America that younger fry could know only to be hearsay. His unpretentious memoir of his Kentucky boyhood and newspaper novitiate, *Myself When Young*, deftly exposes roots that still keep the sap rising in octogenarian arteries.

Arthur Krock had to work for what he got. He was bred to self-sufficiency in a world that was still half-frontier and half-immigrant will-to-scrabble. His ancestry, mostly German-Jewish coming from Prussia, Silesia, and Alsace-Lorraine, trusted to family solidarity for social security. But the land helped too. Arthur remembers the graciousness of a tree-filled lawn in semi-rural Kentucky, but away from the lawn, in utilitarian array, stood the pump, the lye hopper, the springhouse, the icehouse, the smokehouse, the melon patch, and the privy.

It was a workaday world, and Arthur remembers stuffing geese with corn to fatten them for Christmas. His mother, blind for six years after his birth, had to pass him over to grandparents and uncles for rearing, but it was still "family." Schooling was hit or miss, but there were good books around, and Arthur knew more about London (from Thackeray and Dickens) than anyone would get from the "social studies" favored today. Depression kept him from completing his courses at Princeton, but newspaper work in Louisville did for him what newspaper work in Baltimore did for H.L. Mencken in the same period. As a "back-up" political reporter on the *Louisville Herald*, which strove to keep up with the better-heeled *Times* and *Courier-Journal*, Arthur discovered at a quite impressionable age that politics was "art, profession and con game" in subtly varying proportions. He never forgot the lesson; the con game in the New Deal period was still the con game, even when practiced by supposedly selfless creatures who talked about a passion for anonymity.

We may freely grant that Southern treatment of Negroes, even in border state Kentucky, was not precisely in accord with the world of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. But the realist in Arthur Krock insists on pointing out to the likes of Tom Wicker that the quarter in Glasgow, Kentucky, known as the Kingdom, where the blacks lived, was better kept than the nearby poor white purlieus. Whatever it may have been, the Kingdom was not Glasgow's slum. The Do-Gooders of the thirties, who destroyed the old rural South by an agricultural policy that speeded the substitution of machinery for field hands on a smaller permitted acreage, set in motion an internal migration that, by the time of the nineteen sixties, had really created some slums (Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York, for example) that are frightful beyond belief. Skeptical of government intervention, Arthur Krock is in a position to say "I told you so" to his journalistic successors. He doesn't raise the issue directly in the gentle pages of *Myself When Young*. But anyone who knows a hawk from a handsaw can read between Arthur Krock's pleasantly brooding lines.

The nineties, in some literature, was the decade of Coxey's Army and the Depression of 1893. They were also the Gay Nineties, when "gay" had a more wholesome connotation than is currently attached to the word. They were the time of the front porch, the genial local-color artist, the pleasant magazine draftsmanship of A.B. Frost, Frederick Remington, and Charles Dana Gibson. Arthur Krock grew up away from the big cities, where the Depression was really felt. But in those days the country could still save the city if only by providing a self-sufficient refuge. We had a working decentralization then. Arthur Krock, in his old age, has become that decentralization's laureate. Tom Wicker had better meditate on the career of his predecessor.

John Chamberlain

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The Great American Saloon Series

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by James Grant

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Hotel Algonquin and the Blue Bar

In the twenties the Hotel Algonquin became a sort of haven for the famed Round Table, a group that included Robert Benchley, Dorothy Parker, Robert E. Sherwood, Alexander Woolcott, George S. Kaufman, and some of the staff from the New Yorker *magazine. Now shrouded in an illustrious literary heritage, the Algonquin has never been more popular or profitable. The murrain of the New Age has yet to infest the place, and the lilt of the more graceful era still lingers. Perhaps that is why Alternative types like Banfield, Campaign, Grant, Kristol, and Tyrrell never come to New York without putting in an appearance at the Blue Bar or in the lobby's elegant lounge.*

In this edition of the Great American Saloon Series we see the Algonquin as it is today—as it has endured. For a fuller view of its gorgeous past read Margaret Case Harriman's Vicious Circle, *a history of the Round Table group. Her father, Frank Case, has a full account of the Algonquin in* Tales of a Wayward Inn. *And in* Years with Ross *James Thurber recollects his association with Harold Ross, founder and editor of the* New Yorker.

—P.D. Tyrrell

(NEW YORK)—The hotel's worthy past notwithstanding, my favorite Algonquin story has nothing to do with Robert Benchley or Harold Ross. It concerns, rather, a mouse and a cat, and dignity, which is the moral of the tale.

My wife had just checked into the hotel and was up in her room unpacking. From the corner of her eye, she saw a dark animal streak out of the closet and across the room. Mortified, she rushed to the lobby and informed the clerk that she had seen a mouse. The clerk promised immediate action.

Returning to her room an hour later, my wife stealthily unlocked the door. She peeked inside to confront a pair of glowing eyes perched atop the television set. She slammed the door and rushed to a bellhop, who was showing another new arrival to his room.

"There's something in my room!" she exclaimed.

The bellhop regarded her calmly. "It's a cat," he said.

"A cat?"

"Yes, the house cat, for your . . ." The bellhop finished the sentence with a wave of his hand, glancing uneasily from my wife to the second guest.

"Oh, for my . . . *problem*," my wife suggested, returning the gesture.

The bellhop smiled with relief.

The cat, meanwhile, had done its duty. My wife vows eternal gratitude to the animal from refraining from outward displays of surfeit. Only a slightly distended belly suggested the gore of the battle.

While confessing ignorance of the facts, I am willing to bet that the following has occurred: A hotel supply company that markets a remote-control, electromagnetic mousetrap—perhaps called the Gb-80 De-Mouse—sent a salesman to the Algonquin, but the hotel informed the man that "The

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cat has been with us for ages and the present arrangement has worked out quite well. The Gb-80 really isn't us."

Evidently, the hotel has offered no more encouragement to salesmen of artificial flowers, contemporary furniture, or self-service elevators. Fresh orchids grace the lobby and rose buds beam at guests over breakfast; every chair in the lobby has survived a dozen fads in interior decorating; and guests still wait for the single, man-steered Algonquin elevator.

Margaret Case Harriman, the daughter of one-time Algonquin owner Frank Case, wrote that H.L. Mencken attributed his literary genius to long waits for the hotel lift. "I belong to the company of deep thinkers who daily congregate and wait for the Algonquin elevator," the sage of Baltimore deadpanned. "The Algonquin elevator is the muezzin of Forty-fourth street. Like the Mohammdean, it climbs to its tower and makes strange noises and we below can only wait and pray. When it comes down again we go about our business as usual. There is plenty of time for contemplation in between."

I was sitting in the lobby of the Algonquin not long ago, drinking beer and perusing the morning's *Times*. It was a forbidding day. Snow swirled down Forty-fourth Street, driving before it hats, newspapers, and theater-goers. Fur-swathed women in high leather boots, snow still clinging to their lashes, walked through the lobby on the arms of men who might have been putting them through college.

It was 6:00 P.M. A grandfather's clock struck the hour at a brisk *allegro vivace*. The tempo was unexpectedly fast, a parody on the clock's stately presence. Waiters appeared, vanished, and then reappeared, summoned by table-mounted brass bells. Two dowagers sat in Victorian wing chairs and talked of horses and tax accountants.

The lobby's chairs, sofas, and lamps might have been plucked from the living room of someone's one-eyed aunt. I read and eavesdropped that evening in an open English armchair, "Hepplewhite in feeling," as a friend later noted. An antique Chinese porcelein lamp shone gently to my right. "I worry about these lamps," the hotel manager, Andrew A. Anspach, confessed to me the next day. "Oh, I know I shouldn't—they've been here for 60 or 70 years. But I do."

The room is paneled in oak. Posts that rise from floor to ceiling are also paneled, and on them are mounted lights shaded by curved, opaque glass. A few years ago, the world's only maker of the shades notified Mr. Anspach that it was going out of business. The hotel placed a final order and seven extra pieces are packed away upstairs. Modern tastes have also robbed the Algonquin of commercially produced furniture. The hotel must specially commission each new lobby chair.

"Civilized," Mr. Anspach decided. "If I could use only one word to describe the lobby, it would be 'civilized.' The room is warm and sophisticated, too, of course, but I suppose that all that is understood when you say civilized." Mr. Anspach is entirely right. The lobby suggests a fine men's club that was redone by a sensible woman.

People who sit in the lobby of the Hotel Algonquin look interesting. Whether they exude that quality themselves or absorb it from the paneling has never been explained. Julie Christie, Dustin Hoffman, or Peter Ustinov, of course—all of them regulars at the hotel ("and Gore Vidal, be sure and mention him because he loves to be mentioned," Mr. Anspach said)—would look interesting in the lobby of the Port Authority Bus Terminal. So woould my acquaintances, the dowagers. But the young man far to my right, in wire frame glasses and a white pullover sweater emblazoned with the letter "T" did himself no harm sitting here. Neither did the buxom middle-aged woman off yonder, who wore her glasses propped up on top of her head.

It was ten minutes past seven. My dowagers were putting on their furs for the ride to the Shubert Theater. Letter T had disappeared, perhaps with the lady with the glasses on top of her head. The lobby, which an hour earlier was full of talk and people, had emptied of both. Thirsty, and hungry only for more voices, I repaired to the Blue Bar.

The bar is tucked in a paneled recess just a few steps inside the hotel. There is room for six on stools at the bar and for a dozen more along a winding leather couch. A pewter chandelier, depicting the majesty of eighteenth-century British sea power, dispenses quiet light. When voices don't gang up on it, the refrigerating equipment behind the bar sends up a soothing hum.

A graduate student I knew used to drink beer at the Blue Bar (which even then wasn't blue, except for a few cocktail tables) to celebrate anything that resembled literary success. The celebrations were invariably sober, owing to the high price of beer. But the only thing that saved the student from bankruptcy was his heavy hand with prose and the attendant scarcity of his triumphs.

When I took my place at the bar that night, a man in a gray sharkskin suit, red shirt, and suede vest was talking to the bartender. He spoke with grudging admiration of a thief who had stolen a large sum of money. The thief had fled to Brazil and then to Europe before returning to New York "to face it voluntarily," the man in sharkskin said. "I ought to know," he added with a little smile. "I followed the son of a bitch halfway around the world." He lit a cigarette, inhaled, and stared at himself in the mirror that arches above the cash register.

The bartender guessed that the thief was pretty smart.

"You have to be smart to steal $280 million, buddy," the other replied. He squinted into his cigarette smoke. I would relate more of this story, but brandy had dulled my perception. Besides, it sounded like the kind of thing that leads to the White House.

Time passes quickly at the Blue Bar. I checked my watch (it was 11:00 P.M.) and signed my check. The snow had stopped and begun to melt; what was left had already assumed the brownish hue of discarded chewing tobacco. I walked through the lobby to the elevator. The room had filled with buffet clients, clutching their evening's Play Bills. Waiters hovered over candle-lit tables loaded with silver chafing dishes. It all looked so good that when the elevator finally arrived I had decided to stick around and get some dinner. □

Book Review

Burr

by Gore Vidal
Random House $8.95

IF THERE IS SUCH a thing as woman's intuition, Gore Vidal has it in abundance.

There was simply no way of knowing when this novel was conceived that events—the disgrace of a vice president, the culpability of a whole gang of former officials of a national administration—would evoke an obligatory snicker when any prominent political figure of any period was mentioned.

The germ of the mood was there a few years back. By now it has settled heavily over the countryside, and *Burr* is the sort of book that our more breathless critics would call "breathtakingly contemporary." The business of *Burr* is to debunk national leaders, and Vidal's theme is that they've always been rotten.

Burr is our number-one best selling novel, and as anyone who is at all interested knows by now, it tells the story of Aaron Burr (1756–1836), Thomas Jefferson's first vice president—the fellow who shot Alexander Hamilton in a duel and later got himself charged with treason. A black spot on our history? Not so, insists Vidal. In fact, he seems to feel that Aaron Burr was about the only good thing that happened to young America.

George Washington, for instance, was mean, stupid, dull, incompetent, and nastily cunning. And besides he had huge high buttocks and bosoms like a woman. "The decorous relationship with his wife Martha," we are told by Burr, who narrates a good deal of the plot, "was simply an alliance between properties, and typical of Washington's ambition, of his cold serpent nature."

The portrait of Washington is acidly etched in sharp bitchy tones, the relationship between the General and Hamilton coyly hinted at: "The slow solemn general

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waddled with dignity through the camp . . . like a ginger terrier at his heels frisked the young impertinent aide [Hamilton]."

Hamilton is silly, a precocious and childlike hothead, born illegitimate and basically a fool. But Jefferson comes off even worse. If you've always secretly yearned to think of Jefferson as one of history's primary villains, you'll have to read the novel. He was, we are told, shifty, cowardly, flatulently boring, a hypocritical and pathological liar who not only habitually cuckolded his friends but also beat his horse.

Nor are the novel's lesser figures dealt with more kindly: Adams, Monroe, Lafayette—a pack of ludicrous bumblers. Madison and Marshall are the only figures of the period who do at all well. Madison was "good," if a bit foolish, and Marshall is redeemed by his hatred for his cousin, Jefferson.

But Aaron Burr himself is an altogether different sort of fellow.

Burr was brave and cool on the battlefield, the only one with the vision to see that the whole revolution was childish, not power hungry like the rest. (He did want to be king of Mexico, but apparently that's not the same thing.) Burr is urbane, witty, detached, standing apart from it all and laughing at those puny little figures of American history, scampering about, trying to run a country.

We get most of this assessment of American history from Burr himself, as he tells it to a young and adoring law clerk. And if Vidal had not had his own peculiar ax to grind, he might have created a truly memorable character. We could have been made to see Burr as he must have been at the time of the narrative, a defeated, philosophically embittered aging man, realizing that he would go down in history not for his accomplishments—there were none—but for his failures, his only defense being to patronize the people who really created our nation. He might have been shown as pathetic as he must in real life have been, and we could still have ended by liking him and sympathizing with him.

But this is not the case. There is no effort at all to expand Burr's one-dimensional view of himself, to show him in the round. He is a flat character, and the whole thrust of the book is to depict Burr as hero and the others as incompetent fools, knaves, and villains.

Why? If we have read Vidal's other writings, we realize that something interesting is happening here. Burr, with his foppishly waspish view of the rest of humanity, his distaste for conventional morality and his almost desperate desire to show that morality to be fraudulent, his delight in meddling around mischievously with affairs of state—Burr bears a striking resemblance to Vidal himself. Vidal, we realize somewhere during the first quarter of the book, is portraying in Aaron Burr exactly the kind of man he would like to be—the kind of man he probably thinks he is.

This self-portraiture inevitably results in distortion. Although Vidal is masterful at creating and inspiring a sense of Olympian contempt and superiority—in fact, that's what he's best at—and although he narrows historical incidents to achieve that end, there are times when he just can't bring it off.

Even the most casual student of history, for instance, remembers that Thomas Jefferson attempted to write an antislavery clause into the Declaration of Independence. But this unruly historical fact is never mentioned in the novel, and instead Vidal sums up Jefferson's whole complex position on slavery by simply showing "Massa Tom" rutting among the slave girls. And there had to be at least some minor degree of competence among our troops and their leaders to have beaten the British. But Burr/Vidal will have none of it. All credit goes to the French.

Burr is loaded with warped writing. "At the approach of the British army, Governor Jefferson fled to Monticello, leaving the state without administration. At Monticello he dawdled, thought only of how to transport his books to safety. Not until the first British troops had started up the hill did he and his family again take to their heels." When Jefferson runs he is a coward. When he stays, he's a dawdler.

No one can do anything right except Burr himself, and when Vidal's research discloses Burr acting in a way that he, Vidal, criticizes in others, then it's only because Burr plays games and just doesn't give a fig. "I was selected by the Senate to respond to the presidential address . . . some elevated nonsense (fear of the Indian tribes was that session's crisis) . . ."

Had Burr been depicted as a distorter of reality merely to serve his own purposes, then this could have been a fine novel, for Vidal writes with unusual verve and competence, and he is superb at creating the sort of setting that dramatizes the mood of the period.

But in the end, it is Vidal who twists the facts for his own purposes, and not Burr. And that purpose, we suspect, is to inculcate in the reader a strong revulsion for our country and the people who shaped it. (And this conclusion is not at all farfetched. Vidal has never attempted to conceal his antipathy for America.)

"Delicious fun," wrote one of the country's most prestigious critics of *Burr*. "A reappraisal of our ancestors is necessary and healthy," said another.

Now superciliousness must always be delicious in a way. Contemptuous disregard functions, after all, as a sort of pornography for the impotent ego. And I suppose that if we allow ourselves to experience it, it can be titillating indeed. But healthy? Well, the Vidal types would tell us that *all* forms of pornography are healthy. And by those standards, ***Burr*** is a robust novel. Still, there are other standards, operating even today, measured against which ***Burr*** and its author would be considered unusually pale and unhealthy. It's comforting

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to remember that those standards still do operate.

It's very fashionable just now to feel superior to those floundering little wretches we see scurrying around Washington. And it's heady stuff, this business of setting ourselves up as intrinsically superior to national leaders, of gleefully reducing them to somewhere beneath our own level (a different thing altogether from disagreeing with their policies or even deciding they're a pack of damned rascals). And it's the business of a novel like *Burr* to encourage this attitude. If we can learn absolute contempt for our ancestors, it is no problem at all to learn absolute contempt for our peers. And this, I think, would titillate Vidal mightily.

Patricia Coyne

The Public Policy

by Peter J. Rusthoven

Please Pass the Crises

LAST DECEMBER, with appropriate fanfare and publicity, Nelson A. Rockefeller resigned his lifetime job as Governor of New York to become chairman of something called the Commission on Critical Choices for Americans. This rather alliterative entity—created, founded, and presumably patented by Rockefeller himself—plans to bless the nation over the next few years with studies of economic, social, political, and philosophical "trends," and has already lined up an impressive list of worthies to further its tasks. Vice President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger are there, *ex officio*, joining such names as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Clare Booth Luce, nuclear physicist Edward Teller, and former Miss America and *I've Got A Secret* panelist Bess Myerson (currently doing good deeds for consumers). The budget of this little enterprize is estimated at around $20 million, including $1 million each fron Nelson and brother Laurance, and *almost* including, on White House recommendation, $1 million from the national treasury. (This last was killed because some viewed the proposal as an indirect subsidy to a Rockefeller presidential bid.) Despite this setback, however, Rockefeller's Commission gives every promise of leading a rich, full, famous, and eventually verbose life, as it sets to work outlining "critical choices" for us all.

Not surprisingly, most of the publicity surrounding the creation of the Commission centered on its possible use as a springboard for Rockefeller's fourth bid for the Republican presidential nomination. This prospect was greeted with varying degrees of enthusiasm or dismay, depending on whom one read. *National Review*, for example, was wary of Rockefeller's past; but after noting his always-sound position on defense, his support for Nixon on Vietnam, his stand during the Attica prison riots, and his recent crackdowns on welfare and drug abuse, they concluded that the Commission might help make the governor a serious candidate "for the first time." *Christian Century* noted much the same factors as *National Review*, and also saw the Commission as an adjunct to a presidential bid. However, the editors of that worthy journal saw Rockefeller's recent activities as an expedient and deplorable change for the man who once fought so well and bravely against the twin evils of Goldwater and Nixon. After noting that Rockefeller had yet to apologize for his sorry role in the Attica incident, they warned academia not to allow itself to be bought off by the suddenly conservative Rockefeller; specifically, good scholars everywhere must resist the blandishments of the nefarious Irving Kristol, reliably reported to be distributing Rockefeller's largesse in an effort to recruit talent for the Commission. *Time* and *Newsweek*, while advancing no novel themes about creeping conservatism in the groves of academe, were nonetheless torn by Rockefeller's latest move. His seeming shift to the Right disturbed them, but they had invested so much time and ink over the last twelve years arguing that Rockefeller alone could save the Republicans from disaster that his recent positions were at least partially forgiven as necessary concessions to the many backward among his party. Thus, their stories about the Commission continued in the chummy "Rocky" vein first adopted in the late fifties—but speculated cattily that the million-dollar gifts of Nelson and his brother might be viewed as violations of new federal laws setting $50,000 limits on family contributions to presidential efforts.

All this, of course, is part of the grand political game, and as such is quite legitimate. Rockefeller, after all, remains a figure of import in both national and Republican circles; and this latest quest for the big prize may even prove successful. Indeed, a number of people, including this author, can contemplate that possibility with considerably more equanimity and even confidence than seemed possible in 1968. Nevertheless, there is one unfortunate aspect of the Rockefeller effort to this date which the media have not, and probably will not, mention—namely, the nature of the candidate's latest vehicle for keeping himself in the public eye. I refer, of course, to the Commission on Critical Choices itself.

Now what, one might well ask, can possibly be wrong with Rocky's Commission? True, big-name committees never seem to accomplish much; but if Rockefeller wants to spend a lot of money hiring a lot of people to make a lot of studies, where's the harm? Helps unemployment, doesn't it? Keeps junior faculty off the streets. And even if Rockefeller is using it to run for President again—well, there are a lot *worse* ways to run for that office (or haven't you been reading the *Washington Post* lately?). Besides, Rockefeller has lined up some very talented people. So where's the problem?

Well, the answer is quite simple. No one cares about how Rockefeller runs for President—the problem is just the whole silly idea that America should start scouting around for a bunch of "critical choices" to make. *Webster's* tells us that "critical" means "crucial" or "indispensable for the weathering, solution, or overcoming of a crisis." A "crisis," in turn, is "the decisive moment" or "an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs." Sound familiar? It should—you've heard it all before. We've been playing this particular game since the early sixties, starting with "an agenda for the nation;" moving from there to "establish priorities;" then attempting to deal with crises in Vietnam, in race relations, and the cities; pausing, in the wake of serious national "failure," to subject our "value systems" to "critical and searching reevaluation" before we "reexamined and rearranged our priorities;" and so on, *ad nauseum*, with the current stops being Watergate, the "crisis of confidence in government," and the ever popular energy shortage. In short, crisis mongering, one of the biggest growth stocks of the last decade, is still very active on the political exchange. The Commission on Critical Choices is merely one of the latest products.

Unfortunately, though, the crisis mentality is not just a harmless diversion that sells newspapers while giving good Americans something to be concerned about. Edward Banfield's analysis, presented to a largely unappreciative academic community in his impressive 1968 work, *The Unheavenly City*, remains the most perceptive statement on this topic: "Although it is easy to exaggerate the importance, either for good or ill, of the measures that government has adopted or might adopt, there does appear to be a danger to the good health of the society in the tendency of the public to define so many situations as 'critical problems'—a definition that implies (1) that 'solutions' exist or can be found and (2) that unless they are found and applied at once, disaster will befall. . . . although there are many difficulties to be coped with, dilemmas to be faced, and afflictions to be endured, there are very few problems that can be solved . . . although much is seriously wrong. . . . No disaster

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impends *unless it be one that results from public misconceptions that are in the nature of self-fulfilling prophecies*" (emphasis added).

Banfield cites some telling instances of crisis thinking at work—the best, perhaps, being that of the young rioter, who in the context of the "racial" and "urban" crises became convinced that "he was not a boy out raising hell but a victim of injustice fighting for a college education." Timothy Wheeler's examination of the "energy crisis" in last month's *Alternative* is an equally persuasive presentation of the virtues of the crisis mentality, in a somewhat different setting.

It may, of course, be premature to criticize the Commission on Critical Choices on such grounds. My own bias, unlike *Christian Century*'s, is that a project which secures the aid of Irving Kristol can't be all bad. Furthermore, I have a fair measure of respect for Nelson Rockefeller; and *Time* magazine notwithstanding, I believe his shift to the Right may involve something more genuine than an attempt to soothe suspicious, conservative Republicans. Nor do I doubt that the collective talents of the members of the Commission may yield some intelligent and even valuable work, in addition to the standard quota of pap.

But it is unfortunate that Rockefeller could not resist the temptation to lead his well-heeled Commission under the shopworn banner of "crisis." One expects this mentality as a substitute for analysis from any number of journals and individuals—but not, one would hope, from the next Republican presidential nominee. If Rockefeller continues to focus his efforts along the lines suggested by the title of his Commission, he may well find his fourth bid for the White House as disappointing as the last three—not because his past is too "liberal," or his current maneuvers are too "transparent," but simply because the majority of the party should be looking for more than another peddler of "critical choices." □

Book Review

The Counterfeiters

by Hugh Kenner
paper Doubleday Anchor $1.95

NEAR THE CLOSE of the seventeenth century something of a revolution shook the craft of English letters. It began when the metaphysical poets fell into obscurity and mysticism—their work dying the tortured death they always seemed to wish for it—and it ended when a totally different sort of writer took their place: the "Augustan," the eighteenth-century gentleman of Reason. With the passing of Cowley in 1667 the centuries-old role of poet as divine muse and preacher was no longer believable. Dryden, who was then just rising to fame, initiated the new role of poet as arbiter of good judgment and taste. We know, or at least we think we know, why this revolution took place. It was directly connected with the fashionable empiricism of such figureheads as Newton and Locke, according to which traditional metaphor seemed childishly unreal. It also reflected an exhaustion of the intense introspection of the age of Reformation. But exactly what happened, as opposed to why it happened, is a mystery, for we are still dragging ourselves through the age that Dryden heralded, namely, the age of art under the shadow of Reason. Hugh Kenner's *The Counterfeiters* is a remarkable and perhaps unique attempt to solve the mystery, to show our imagination just where art, literature in particular, has brought us since *The Dunciad*.

This book is quite short (168 pages, better suited in all respects to paper than to hard cover). And it is not what you think it is. It is not history or literary criticism, though it overflows with a humor well acquainted with both. Interspersed among commentaries on Pope, Swift, and Defoe are tireless sorties to a crowd as colorful as they come (including, for example, Buster Keaton and Charles Babbage and Joseph-Ignace Guillotin). One of Kenner's favorites is the scientist Alan M. Turing who invented the Turing Machine. The Turing Machine is a computer programmed to disguise itself, in response to questions, as a human being. With a good enough program, a Turing-person is indistinguishable from a real person, unless we observers find a better definition of what a real person is than the one used by the machine. In other words, we test the Turing-fake against our own, superior fake. The moral is clear: to solve a good counterfeit is to create a better counterfeit.

Art, according to Kenner, has fallen into just this paradox over the last three centuries, only the artist must distinguish not between a real person and a Turing-person, but between reality and increasingly sophisticated systems of knowledge. Ever since science and technology rendered art per se an inferior reflection of nature, a vague and "prettied-up" way of saying something more clearly presentable as fact, the artist's defense has been to counterfeit fact. Counterfeiting is his last chance to be taken seriously. Indeed, all modern genres are part of this effort—from Swift's forged "modest" proposal (political satire is born) to Defoe's forged diary (the novel is born) to Wordsworth alias the unlettered naturalist (nature poetry is born) to Andy Warhol's mimicry of a Campbell Soup Co. assembly line (pop art is born). Counterfeiting is one of the awful costs of modern civilization. The problem is not simply, as Ruskin wrote, that mass production competes with art in technique, but rather that mass production is a principle which competes with art in legitimacy. The artist's forgery must appear to obey a rational method and fool our squintingly rational gaze. Artistry itself is made to seem fortuitous. Homer faced ignorance and declaimed; today we face skepticism and deceive.

By quoting Wyndam Lewis on the frontispiece—"wherever there is objective truth there is satire"—Kenner defines the essential predicament of Augustan literature. "Objective truth," of course, had a strangle hold on that age, a hold that tightened until reality had no property save "extension, hardness, and color" (Locke) and language had become a mere labeling machine for atomized pieces of data. In the heyday of the Royal Society it was in vogue to be seen not with a sword or penquill, but with a magnifying glass hanging from your pocket. To identify a thing was to describe its function empirically. Kenner cites the French philosopher Jacques de Vaucanson (1709–1782) who "exhibited in Paris a mechanical duck which could waddle and splash, beat the air with detailed feathered wings, wag its head, quack, pick up grain, ingest this with swallowing movements, and eventually excrete the residue." This isn't a duck, you say? You intuit that it lacks duckness (*anatitas*!), that it didn't come from an egg? You utter scholastic nonsense. *Prove* that it's not a duck!

Because the Augustan artist couldn't prove it, he fulfilled Lewis' dictum and turned to satire, a thousand varieties of satire. To satirize something is to counterfeit it, to reproduce it (in the manner of Vaucanson's contraption) with such care that even its absurdity is manifest. In a world overflowing with rational systems, political, economic, religious—even classical literature had become a system, replete with rules—the good artist is a good mimic. Whoever is writing the "Modest Proposal" is a brilliant economist. Robinson Crusoe is an exemplary middle-class entrepreneur. Gulliver, the yahoos, and the Houyhnhnms are ideal enlightenment prototypes: empiric man, barbarized man, and rational man. Even Alexander Pope, who until his mid-twenties shaped his career after Virgil's, speaks out as his urbane Horatian self not nearly so often as he crafts paltry substance with breathtaking style. Pope, like all counterfeiters, was afraid to subordinate genre to artistic purpose. He translated epics while he authored *mock*-epics.

Counterfeiting is now an accepted form of art. As long as the technological progress woven into our environment becomes ever less comprehensible to the intelligent mind, we can infer from Kenner that the urge to counterfeit will grow. Often we don't have to change the counterfeited model at all. When we read that "a typewriter is itself a clerical system in which marked and markable objects are manipulated according to rule"—this statement is satire as it stands. We once ridiculed politicians by exaggerating their mannerisms of speech; with Eisenhower, we need only

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quote him verbatim. Warhol merely signs a soup can and *le voila, un chef-d'oeuvre.* The world, concludes Kenner, is becoming one vast *musée sans murs* where the proper person can transform almost anything into art. Will it be good art? This question Kenner doesn't handle, though if it's the only art we might just as well ask, is it a tolerable civilization which produces such art?

These considerations are outside *The Counterfeiters* as Kenner has written it, foreign not to the topic but to the lightheartedness of his venture. Kenner's important achievement is his much-needed emphasis on the Augustans as innovators trying stoically yet defensively to make sense out of a new world. If they could be wooden and prosy students of Neoclassical doctrine, they could also be modern in a way that the later Romantics could not. Kenner's shotgun-like wit, on the other hand, leaves wide spaces untouched. Art historians will wish he mentioned a Baroque painting or a Mannerist bust. Literature students will wonder whatever happened to Milton. And the avant-garde would prefer that the entire book had confined itself to Buster Keaton. *The Counterfeiters* is a strikingly ambitious journey, and if it is guilty of bewildering gaps, so does it entertain and enlighten.

Neil Howe

The Last Detail

IMAGINE HOW MUCH fun it would be to ride from Norfolk, Virginia, to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by train and bus with a sailor who kept telling you jokes and stories you had heard before! That's how much fun it is to watch *The Last Detail.*

The Last Detail is a compendium of all the current clichés in moviemaking. It is condescending, dull, and pointless. More important by far, it is almost a parody of how to make a boring film.

A friend remarked, after seeing *The Last Detail*, that he wondered what had been left on the cutting-room floor when he saw what had been left in. The implication, of course, was that the answer to his question was "nothing."

The story of *The Last Detail* is that a moronic sailor, played by Randy Quaid, has committed a crime and must be transported by two other sailors from the Norfolk naval base to the brig at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

At this point, the first three cheap shots of the movie are squeezed off in quick succession:

—The convicted sailor has been sentenced, for stealing $40.00 from a polio collection box, to eight years of hard labor, because polio is the pet charity of the naval base commander's wife;

—The convicted sailor is a person who is so innocent and so dumb that he makes a cocker spaniel seem like Charles Colson;

—The two sailors selected to take the prisoner to prison are experienced navy salts, as familiar with the injustice of military life as Randy Quaid is innocent of it.

The two guards, one white and one black of course, are played by Jack Nicholson and Otis Young. Of the latter, little is known except that he is so good that butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He never got married because he had to support his ailing mother.

Jack Nicholson, however, is the master of self-delusion, a person who has made it to stardom by playing men who sometimes thought they were something better than they were, yet knew, in their heart of hearts, that they were no better than they feared.

For instance, in one scene, Nicholson tells an obviously bored girl how great it is to be in the Navy. It is a man's job, he says, standing up on the bridge with the spray billowing all around. Suddenly he notices her smirks and says, defeated by a teenage girl's mockery, that the best thing about his job is that he has a sexy uniform.

Nicholson is the man who can consider it a triumph of staggering proportions to get a cheeseburger sent back so that the cheese on it is properly melted. He is also the man who can lean back in the cheapest looking vinyl chair on earth, with his arms on its spindly wrought iron, in the waiting room of a seamy whorehouse, and look down at his shoes and say to his black companion, "I guess we're just lifers, huh?"

When he says that, he means that he is not only in the Navy for life, but he is in life, at a very low level, for life.

Nicholson is repellent though because he is so obviously yet a third character—an actor looking down his and the director's and the writer's nose at the person he is playing. He is never really into his role. He is always a little bit above it, looking down upon it. He somehow keeps his *persona* at some distance from his person.

The "story" unfolds as Nicholson and Young take pity on Quaid, despite his innocent kleptomania, and decide to show him some "fun."

That is where the element of condescension comes roaring into the movie, like a tornado crashing into a mobile-home colony in Tupelo, Mississippi.

"Fun" for Nicholson, Quaid, and Young is supposed to be having a really good time drinking beer in a parking lot in Washington, D.C., getting terribly drunk in a crowded hotel room in Washington, also on beer ("The greatest drink in the world," says Nicholson), watching hare krishna chanters in New York, and then visiting a depressing house of ill repute in Boston.

Now we in the audience know that Nicholson knows that it really is not so much fun to do those things. He is simply not convinced that it is fun, and it is beyond the range of his ability, at least so far, to persuade us that he is having a really great time.

The movie then becomes, despite Nicholson's best efforts, an invitation for the audience to sneer at the life of people of inferior social station to those in the audience, few of whom, no doubt, think that beer is the world's greatest drink.

The Last Detail tries to make the audience see that life for some people is truly no more exciting than a train ride in the northeast corridor, but it does not succeed in showing any more than that life might be that dull if people were the kind of people in *The Last Detail.* But since those characters ring so false, the movie says no more than that it is a hollow, boring movie about characters to whom one cannot relate.

The cheap shots continue as the movie goes along, gradually dragging it farther and farther into the realm of the wealthy person's fantasy of the poor person.

Nicholson and Quaid make a slight detour to the home of Quaid's mother. She lives in a miserable house in Camden, New Jersey. When the sailors arrive, she is not there, and they open the door and look inside. The house is messy and littered with empty whiskey bottles.

That is supposed to be terribly meaningful. It is supposed to show us something about how "they" live, but it really shows nothing at all. For all we know, Averell Harriman's house might be messy and filled with empty whiskey bottles sometimes. But we are supposed to see that the house is symptomatic of the same kind of care and rearing that produced a moronic kleptomaniacal sailor. It simply doesn't work.

Another example of failed cheap shots—by the time Quaid is near the end of his journey, he too has summoned the nerve to tell waiters to take back improperly prepared food. This is the myth of the sharpster teaching the rube to be sharp. But it does not work because sending back food is insignificant as an accomplishment, and because we suspect that everyone connected with the film knows it.

Finally, the most pathetic example of sloppy sentimentalism that does not fly: Quaid is taken to a place where he can make an identification bracelet that will designate him as any rank he wishes. He

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chooses to be the same rank as Nicholson. Hero worship.

It is all just piled on a bit too thick. Quaid is too dumb to be believed. He is someone's dream of an obedient puppy of a man.

Like everything else in the movie, it is an example, not of how the other half lives, but of how the top 5 percent would like to think the other half lives.

On top of all of this pretension, the movie is just plain slow. The minutes seem like hours as we watch the trio move down the dull and dusty road to filmic oblivion. *The Last Detail* would have served some purpose only if it were clearly seen to be so dull and so condescendingly offensive that moviemakers tried to serve up a little more realism and excitement.

There is no sign of that happening. □

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 4)

millions of other similarly endowed pathetic-oes stumble through a meaningless existence, wait for their breaks and grouse about the "good fortune" of their betters.

Jehovah must have been appalled, and surely many sharp public relations men still shake their heads as they muse upon the vast fortune poor Mr. Preston could have earned for them. It was as though Harry Truman had turned down the call to public service and continued to bankrupt himself, or the Pope had snubbed the summons of the angels and opened a spaghetti parlor. Not since a youthful Edward Kennedy turned his back on driver's education classes has a mortal so thumpingly sealed his own fate. ROBERT PRESTON . . . you will probably never hear his name again. *Au revoir*, oaf.

What this poor fish did was, in this glorious era, well nigh unthinkable. He committed a mischievous and indeed criminal act and did not make the faintest gesture to embroider it with noble purpose or high-toned symbolism. He merely stepped from his wounded helicopter and confessed, "There wasn't anything else to do"—not a word about political repression, ecological suicide, or the rampant poverty of those thousands of starving young Californians who after queuing up for Mr. Hearst's victuals held a nationally televised food fight. He could have mentioned the cruel condition of our women, the political castration of our homosexuals, the impending demise of the black-footed ferret, or the heartbreak of psoriasis. Rather, he grinned. And, though *Newsweek* described it as a "cryptic" grin, it was a grin nevertheless. Had he possessed the astuteness to boom for any one of the aforementioned causes he would be a free man today with a gorgeous publishing contract, lecturing engagements for the next decade on the college Chautauqua circuit, and an office in Washington paid for by some occult rivulet of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Instead, he grinned.

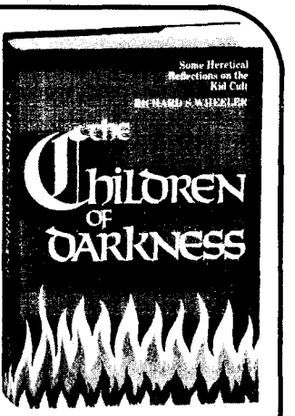
Not only is he a grinning ignoramus, but he is also selfish. Any of a dozen just causes could have been put over on the American people had he but uttered a threatening declaration. He had a two-way radio, why did he not use it? Why not a clenched fist when he emerged from the Huey? Imagine where the Black Panthers would be today had they merely grinned after a shoot-up. Would Mr. Huey P. Newton be the fantastic celebrity he is today had he admitted that he shot cops and tortured fellow blacks because "there wasn't anything else to do"? Or consider the marvelous breakthrough we are now experiencing in adult films. If the forward-looking aesthetes who produce these delicate renderings of man's goatish nature had stated at the outset that they wanted to create foul movies so that they could make mounds of money and retire to Arizona, how many opportunities do you suppose we would have to appreciate the beauties of sadism, bestiality, masochism, sodomy, and other libidinal variations? The pioneers of adult theater had to loosen up the Supreme Court with a few shots of the First Amendment. They had to address themselves to a worthy cause, the cause of free expression and art. Presto, progress was at hand, the greatest advance in art since John Cage heard fingernails scratch across a blackboard.

So let us wash our hands of this wretch. He committed an audacious act and fouled it with a stupid and irresponsible grin. Had he called a press conference and announced that his flight was meant to symbolize the exigency of presidential impeachment, he would be on the cover of every newsweekly in the country. He would be *Times*' "Man of the Year" and the *New Republic* would be editorializing about how Mr. Nixon is imperiling the Republic and the whole free world. "If he does not resign now the country will be torn apart," they would admonish, and that idiotic chorus that most American journalists fall in with would pick up the theme and bellow it interminably until some other psychopath sent them off on yet another just cause.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION— OR COUNTERCULTURE?

ELOQUENT YOUNG WRITER DECLARES: AMERICA MUST CHOOSE



The gulf in America is widening into a chasm: between religious people and secular. "The question," writes Richard S. Wheeler, "is whether this is to be a Christian civilization, or whether Christianity is to be merely a sect within a secular civilization."

Mr. Wheeler opts for Christianity but concedes that "the church has pretty much decamped to the counterculture." He knows this counterculture, having watched it firsthand since Berkeley; but he is frank to blame part of our decline on the collapse of "straight" society.

This bracing book will challenge many conservatives. Mr. Wheeler pleads for *true* individuality—which he finds less among individualists than within the frame of traditional values.

In offering a religious alternative to both the counterculture and the corruptions of "straight" society, Wheeler explores Christianity as the keystone of human liberty; individualism and conformity; the political exploitation of sex; the relationship between the liberals and the kids; ecology and love as counterculture issues; puritanism; squares and conservatives. He compares the Christian vision of salvation with its secular counterparts — science, humane liberalism, individualism, copping out.

Perhaps, Mr. Wheeler concludes, the young are unwittingly performing a service—by showing how little their elders care about anything, "and least of all about moral and spiritual convictions."

RICHARD WHEELER, CONSERVATIVE, WILL RUFFLE ALL LIBERALS AND MANY CONSERVATIVES

- Why liberals are so much better at politics than conservatives
- Is it true that conservatives tend to be more religious than liberals?
- Where, in the spectrum between natural and religious man, do the bulk of Americans belong?
- Political exploitation of sex. Its ultimate goal. Why it is more dangerous than nihilistic politics
- Schisms on the Right: conflict between libertarians and traditionalists reveals deeper, more implacable division
- The church garrisoned. Must Christianity now retreat into monastic life? Why the church will not die
- Faith in science: despite ecology, still the last, flickering hope of both kids and liberals
- The church, not government, as the one avenue to domestic peace
- The vital role of custom, courtesy, and everyday civility
- The political thrust of secularism
- Why the New Left—anarchistic though it is—cannot be divorced from Communism
- Dissent, individuality, conformity—all put in Christian perspective
- The most neglected group in America
- B. F. Skinner as the new guru of the Left
- Why the state is always a poor repository for church law
- The orthodox Christian approach to social responsibility
- Is alienation the key to individuality?
- Issues that won't allow compromise
- The hippie golden rule
- The hidden irony in the slogan, "Power to the people"
- A Christian view of the environmental pantheists. Joseph Wood Krutch's observation on the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity
- The reforming obsession. Why is it so necessary to believe in Progress even as the world collapses?
- They cry "love, love"—and there is no love. The perplexing reality of love which the kids cannot accept
- The Christian corollary to secular reform. The politics of envy
- Why the kids rant against values and customs that vanished years ago
- Situational morality
- Why the kids hate capitalism
- Proliferating versions of doom current today
- Who are the true radicals in today's society?
- The loyalists and their values
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The Bootblack Stand

by George Washington Plunkitt

Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, is celebrating the publication of his new book, which is now available at avant-garde *bookstores throughout New Jersey. Dr. Plunkitt's book is about the importance of altruism in politics and it is titled* What's in It for Me? *Although Dr. Plunkitt expects to earn ten million dollars from sales of his new book, he has agreed to continue to advise public figures through this column. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.*

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

I have a terrible problem. As you probably know I have been imprisoned by Communist secret police and harassed most of my adult life. I have written about life in Russian concentration camps and about torture at the hands of Communist thugs, but I had not realized how advanced have become the KGB techniques of torture until they put me on a Russian commercial jet and flew me into exile. Have you ever had a meal on one of those flying grease pits? Did you ever see 250-pound stewardesses who are only five feet tall? I was sick throughout the flight and my air bag had a hole in it. I became sicker still when I discovered where they had shipped me. And now after reading the newspapers about American politics and the British elections I desire but one thing, I want to be shipped back to Russia. What can I do?

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Dear Mr. Solzhenitsyn:

The surest way to get back into Russia is to become an American businessman—especially if you are in one of those "non-strategic" industries like petroleum production or the production of heavy-duty trucks. Unfortunately this would take too long so I suggest you get a job driving a Pepsi-Cola truck, or perhaps Mr. David Rockefeller could get you a job in his new Moscow branch of the Chase Manhattan Bank. Incidentally, why are you saying all those unkind things about our heroic Russian allies?

—GWP

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

We think Nixon's call for self-sufficiency in energy is terrible. Everyone knows it will lead to the use of natural resources, which is immoral. What can we do about this man they call Nixon?

"I think that I shall never see, a house as lovely as a tree."

S. Bear, Chairperson
Friends of the Dearth

Dear Mr. Bear:

Is there any truth to the rumor that rather than bury your dead you people merely put the corpse in a compacter and glue one of those idiotic little smile stickers to the resultant parchment?

—GWP

Brudnoy's Film Index

■ **Billy Two Hats:** Desi Arnaz Jr. in make-up and buckskins as **Breed** (from half-breed, get it?), Gregory Peck (how the mighty have fallen) in brogue and wounds as Arch, two petty baddies escaping the marshall in de *old* West. Dreariness incarnate.

■ **Blazing Saddles:** Mel Brooks' mad spoof of western shoot-em-ups, starring Black Bart, the Negro sheriff (Cleavon Little), villain Hedley Lamarr (Harvey Korman), Brooks as a Yiddish-speaking Indian chief and a moronic governor, and assorted jokes as old as the hills and as new as Hollywood's latest starlet. A botch of a film, but in moments sublime.

■ **Busting:** Vice-squad cops Elliot Gould and Robert Blake doing society's most crucial work: busting whores, raiding gay bars, intercepting marijuana peddlers, frustrated by the crime lord's muscle and cop connivance. I'm for the criminals.

■ **Conrack:** Jon Voight as a hip modern Mr. Chips gone to a South Carolina sea island to teach Negro kids; you can't emerge with a dry eye, it's *that* maudlin, but Voight is vibrant, the kids are winning, the dilemma of the individual versus encrusted societal regimentation gets yet another go-around. When I saw it in preview, Negroes in the audience hissed it; it's not fashionable for whites to care about **their** colored brethren, and "Black is beautiful."

■ **Day of the Dolphin:** George C. Scott and Flipper redivivus; a toss-up as to who's got the more advanced brain, the porpoise or his film exploiters.

■ **Day for Night:** And on it goes, and on and on, this exquisite little gem of a **French** film about French filmmaking.

■ **The Exorcist:** The *devil* made her do it! You cry blasphemy? Mayhaps, but it *is* compelling, if like a cobra's tango, and it's doing wonders bringing folks back to church, *any* church.

■ **Five on the Black Hand Side:** For once, the Negro as human being. Not much of a comedy, but after "Shaft's Last Crap," or whatever those things are called, it's a much-needed relief.

■ **Magnum Force:** Dirty Harry (Clint Eastwood) back, now routing out fascistic rookie cops whose trip is offing criminals beyond the Law's reach. Vicious and contemptibly conniving, a to-be-avoided-at-all-costs disaster.

■ **McQ:** John Wayne ditto. Who *are* they trying to kid?

■ **Papillon:** Butterflies aren't free. McQueen, Hoffman, and French Guiana's prison system in an endless, humorless, sweaty multimillion-dollar epic botch full of sound and vermin signifying piffle.

■ **Serpico:** A bit rough around the edges, alternately hopelessly idealistic in the liberal direction and depressingly cynical. Alas, the facts square with the film: New York created its Knapp Commission to rout out cop corruption. It went merrily to work, and then? Then—nothing much. Al Pacino is splendid as Frank Serpico.

■ **Sleeper:** Woody Allen at the top of his form, a superlative parody of twenty-second-century America. Side-splitting one-liners, Keatonesque sight gags, a wonderful world of benign dictatorship where, *grace à Dieu*, the biodegradable peanut-butter crazes of today have been shown to be dangerous to your health, and folks eat steak and potatoes—and get it off in isolation booths. A corrective to the boredom of afternoon television and the heebie-jeebies of the cop-flick deluge.

■ **The Sting:** Newman, Redford, the thirties; lovable con men outwitting the baddies. They look smashing in their duds—and watch the couture here and in the up-coming *Great Gatsby* set off a new fashion movement. The plot is juicy, contrived, but more power to it.

■ **The Tall Blond Man With One Black Shoe:** Easy French farce, chuckles rather than guffaws, a soufflé for fans of the droll.

■ **The Three Musketeers:** Dumas' smashing tale filmed yet again, this one as spoof, with everyone and his brother (and sister) tagging along for the fun: Michael York, Oliver Reed, Richard Chamberlain, Simon Ward, Raquel Welch (Raquel Who?), and Charlton Heston as Moses, er, um, Richelieu, that is. The sets are fabulous, here and there it zings, it *is* athletic; but high comedy it isn't.

■ **Walking Tall:** The most amazing comeback in recent film history, this bomb in early 1973 has found its audience at last: take the law in your own hands and clean up evil, Sheriff Buford Pusser (Joe Don Baker); rake in the bread, moviemakers. Go and drool, sanguinary film-goers.

■ **Zardoz:** The future, *à la* John Boorman. With Sean (James Bond) Connery looking beafy and acting as if robots sired him. Pretty colors, stupid dialogue, preposterous throughout.

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Current Wisdom

ONE BORN EVERY MINUTE: Let's call the following discourse of National Public Radio's Steven Bancker "The Aesthetic Revelations of a Dupe" and Raise a Stein to Andy Warhol who has been successfully trepanning New York's *haute* culture crowd for many moons, never giving the suckers an even break:

What fascinates me, Stephen Koch, so much about Andy Warhol is that what he does he doesn't comment on and this is just as true in his movies in which he has several hours of the Empire State Building, or a man asleep or just people doing their thing and the camera zooming in and out at no particular purpose or predictability as it is in the paintings and sculpture that he does. Now what's your reaction to that? What's the explanation and why in heaven's name should it be popular?

—National Public Radio

PROBLEMS OF MODERNITY: One of Ann Landers' correspondents reveals that the unisex movement is a cultural achievement that is not without its costs:

Dear Ann Landers: I am a transvestite. For obvious reasons I order my dress-up pretties from mail-order catalogues. My problem is exactly the opposite of the mother who can't find masculine-looking clothes for her sons. I can't find feminine-looking clothes for myself.

For years I was able to get lace lingerie, organdy blouses, silk dresses, and chiffon hostess gowns. Now that the dykes have taken over the women's fashion industry, I see nothing but man-tailored suits with zippered flies, button-down pockets, plaid shirts, and cowboy boots. No more chiffon and lace. It's all blue denim and hard fabrics with heavy stitching. I haven't seen a satin underslip in three years.

The lesbians are ruining it for thousands of transvestites. We need help.

—*Chicago Sun-Times*

SPEAKING IN TONGUES: The Rt. Rev. Philip Berrigan displays the high state of intellect typical amongst Catholicism's religious radicals. Pass the baloney:

"The only way to live sanely today is to live in resistance," he said. "We need to live this way, we are determined to live this way. Just as we have resisted in the past, there will be other occasions to involve us all in the future. Nixon is going to persist in the American presence in Indo-China and as long as we are there, there will be war there. . . .

"We approach people in order to find out if they want to call their lives into question . . . to assume some nonviolent responsibility for the most atrocious war machine in history . . . peace will come through peacefulness . . . it will come through nonviolent means or not at all."

Mrs. Berrigan also was recently arrested for praying in the White House ("the great crime is to pray in the White House outside the scheduled services") and faces trial.

—*New York Times*

"Whom the gods destroy they

first make mad"– Euripedes

MELDING THE METAPHOR: The chief counsel for the Senate Commerce Committee displays the kind of imaginative use of language that makes American legislative secretions so eminently readable and amusing:

Mr. Pertschuk, sitting in his shirtsleeves with his feet propped on a bookcase, waved his hands and declared:

"The people on the staff have an opportunity to start with a problem on the ground floor and see it develop and come alive. I remember when the Consumer Product Safety Commission was a gleam in Senator Magnuson's eye. Now it's in existence and raising hell."

—*New York Times*
March 3, 1974

THE LIMITS OF PRAGMATISM: Learning the hard way with the intellectual, Mr. Robert Redford:

I had always loved the profound pragmatism of Jack London's story, "To Build a Fire," and one night in France I learned what it was like when I got warm by standing neck-high in a pile of manure.

—*Newsweek*
February 4, 1974

DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE: Another triumph for the sexual revolution:

A sign of Kissinger's growing popularity came after dinner Friday night when Assad bid him farewell with kisses on both cheeks. While kissing is common in the Arab world—Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi seems to kiss Kissinger on every possible occasion—this was a first in Syria.

—*Louisville Courier-Journal*
March 3, 1974

SKIN DEEP BEAUTY: Wanda Coleman, intellectual editor of the Aframerican equivalent of *Playboy*, speaks of the benefits of black centerfolds and of the high purpose of her journal:

It is not that black women have different standard equipment from whites, she said, but rather, that the wider range of options among black women has not yet been explored in the white press:

"Many of our women with dark skin have thin features and straight hair and many of our women with light skin have light-colored eyes and red hair. It's about time for black beauty to be explored."

Coleman said the magazine would help open career possibilities for black women the way white magazines did for white starlets.

—*Los Angeles Times*

THE IDIOT: Proof of the public service performed by newspapers with capacious Letters to the Editor column:

I have just heard on the news that gasoline is going up two cents per gallon and if I don't write this to let off steam I'll probably explode.

Richard Nixon is for the rich and he's making the rich get richer. Yes, I'm referring to the oil companies.

He has this country so nervous and upset that truck drivers are killing each other and people are kidnaping in order to feed the poor.

—*Bloomington Herald-Telephone*
February 26, 1974

BEYOND FREEDOM: Another stirring report from the People's Paradise, this time published in *Northwestern Report*, one of the many splendid, freedom-loving publications of Northwestern U.:

A Northwestern alum, in two appearances on the campus in May, described life in a nation where the price of food has not risen for 18 years. Where students are encouraged to help each other on examinations. And where men and women dress alike.

Gerald Tannebaum, a 1939 Medill grad who returned to the States last year after 26 years residence in the People's Republic of China, described the country as a highly organized place. A place where centralized planning and group spirit make life more stable, he reported, than in the more individualistic competitive society of America.

Food and cotton cloth are rationed in China, for instance, to insure against shortages but, he added, the rations are more than enough for ordinary living.

Group spirit has enabled the Chinese to lessen the effects of natural disasters. . . .

But moves towards greater equality have not totally eliminated sexism from Chinese society, according to Chinese actress Chen Yuanchi. Women, she said, "are slowly winning the right to drive water buffalo in the fields and are still underrepresented on governing bodies." But, she noted, Chinese factories have nurseries where working parents can leave their children.

China has eliminated drug addiction and prostitution and has only a minor incidence of alcoholism, Tannebaum said. He described rehabilitation programs in which addicts and prostitutes were educated to see the oppression of the old China as the source of their problems.

—*Northwestern Report*

BUREAUCRATESE: Delousing language, as practiced by the high-minded geniuses of our Welfare State:

Administration sources said they also are seeking to replace the word "poverty" in the official vocabulary with what one official said should be a more "neutral" term.

"'Poverty' is a value-laden term," he insisted. "We try to avoid value-laden terms. We like neutral terms."

—*Washington Post*

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Correspondence

To the Editor:

Due to my miserable handwriting, and through no fault of *The Alternative* the following sentence was printed in the fourth paragraph of my review of *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind*, that appeared in the March issue: "But a country's foreign policy should not be faithful or immature if that country is not going to act on its youthful ambitions." The sentence should read: "But a country's foreign policy should not be *youthful* or immature. . . ." I don't believe U.S. foreign policy should be faithless.

William Kristol
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

Why did you change your masthead to eliminate the reference to federal grants? I thought that was the best part of it, although the cheap beer, McSorley's, and restroom walls stuff is pretty good. Are you no longer interested in federal grants? Or did you get one too many? I knew a guy who accepted as many federal grants as he could lay his hands on, and it killed him. Died suddenly at age 96. Just like that.

Douglas E. Adams
Rockford, Illinois

As with everything else it was a typo.

—Ed.

To the Editor:

Neil Howe's piece on "Defending Capitalism" (*The Alternative*, March, 1974) was most excellent.

E.P. Schmidt
Oakton, Virginia

To the Editor:

I read your journal devotedly, and particularly appreciated Mr. Neil Howe's article, "Defending Capitalism," in the March issue. I think, though, that a close reading of *Capitalism and Freedom* will show that Professor Friedman (unlike Bentham) values "efficiency" less than the moral ideal of "freedom" and would sacrifice the former for the latter. As for the relationship of "efficiency" to the "moral prerequisites" touched on by Mr. Howe, see Posner, *Economic Analysis of Law* (1973), especially Chapters Fifteen and Twenty-eight.

Christopher DeMuth
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor:

Mr. Lindley Clark, in his recent series on "The Lessons of Free Enterprise," has exposed some vulgar shibboleths of the anticapitalists, and laid to rest many of their myths. Yet at the end of this undertaking (February, 1974), one is appalled to find that Mr. Clark has affirmed the most grotesque and noxious pretension of all: "Free enterprise is not inherently any more moral than truly democratic socialism."

This is true only if one accepts moral relativism, a view which reduces moral questions to the level of one's preference among brands of soda pop. It is the genius of conservatism to deny such a hopeless doctrine, and to argue from its apprehension of the eternal verities—i.e., morality. One of these truths is that each person is entitled to share in the fruits of human industry in proportion to his contribution thereto. The virtue of free enterprise is that it uniquely approximates this just distribution of income and property.

Any other system must be unjust and immoral, appropriating to one man the product of another, in the process destroying the independence of both. Thus, Mr. Clark's forced distinction between "truly democratic socialism" (begging the question whether such a beast can ever exist) and dictatorship is worthless. *All* socialistic systems—from Communism to liberalism—are arrant denials of justice. Whether one is trampled by the jackboots of storm troops or by the feet of a mob is a matter of indifference to the tramplee. The mere form of democracy can give no legitimacy to a system inherently immoral.

Mr. Clark's argument that free enterprise is the most efficient economic system is correct, but not fundamental. Efficiency is a weighty matter, but it can be freely sacrificed to higher purposes; thus, the moral argument is crucial. Conservatives have scant need to talk of nickels and dimes when we can triumph on the issue of right and wrong.

Don Samelson
Madison, Wisconsin

To the Editor:

The Preston episode is an outrage, and ineradicable stain on the honor of the Republic. I have composed a dirge for the occasion:

"The Persistent Private"
(A Dirge on the State of the Republic)

He flunked out of flight school
But kept right on trying
To master the science
Of rotary flying

"Practice makes perfect,"
Young Preston once heard
So early one morning
With nary a word

He set out o're housetops,
Just skimming the ground
While squadrons of gumshoes
(Those airborne bloodhounds)

Bayed far to the rear,
No closer they dared
For young Private Preston
Seemed not at all scared

Of gravity, buckshot
Convention, or guards
Who waited, eyes skyward,
In Nixon's backyard

To poppings of gunfire
The private descended
Though wounded, he smiled
(and his leg wounds soon mended)

He'll have to stand trial,
The Army's decreed
But no more will Preston
Sit still at Fort Meade

For guard duty, sergeants
And other dull things,
None of them really suggesting
The wings

That Preston, like all of us,
Dreamt he might find for
Escape from the every day
Olive drab grind.

James Grant
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor:

My appreciation for the excellent quality of literature in recent issues of *The Alternative*. As so publicly pronounced, I am obligated to my dear brother Jerry for my subscription. It certainly is one of my most interesting Christmas gifts.

However, the nature of his letter to you (February 1974) required an almost immediate trip to visit him in Florida despite the press of many important matters here in our colder clime.

I am pleased to report that, despite the implications from his letter, he is indeed in good health and, further, Panama City, Florida, is a fine city. In fact, it is almost as much fun to read *The Alternative* along the beaches as it is by our firesides.

I wish you continued success on your subscription sales. Perhaps in future issues you might include, for those of us nonintellectuals who reside further than you from the towers of academia, a pony for translation into the vernacular of us plain folk. Best wishes and a sincere hope for a fine May and a rewarding November.

Cy Gerde
Lafayette, Indiana

To the Editor:

I just finished your recent editorial in *The Alternative*, "Intellectualoids." Great piece. I agree with you. Those _____ are so smart, they can't _____ and walk at the same time. Cheers.

Dan Hales
Winnetka, Illinois

To the Editor:

Our first (unrequested) copy of *The Alternative* pleased us enough to subscribe immediately, and the second issue offends me enough to consider stopping my check. Regardless of other material, pairing Alan Reynolds' item on pornography and Brudnoy's praise for *The Exorcist* (March, 1974) raises a very dark cloud, indeed.

Reynolds declares "bad business drives out good" and as a filmmaker for more than thirty years I contemplate with horror the bad business represented by *The Exorcist*. To rate it "must-see" and "screened magnificently" does your publication much harm.

If—which is not the case—I was to concede that this film was a well-done film, I would still feel a nausea about the clamor and praise which will earn it a fortune and entice dozens of inept, cruddy, conscienceless filmmakers to out-do its horrors.

If—as is not the case—I was to concede that its subject matter and treatment justified its offenses, I would still consider its producers guilty of a most unforgivable offense. As a filmmaker, I am familiar with special effects and rarely feel chill at a movie murder because it is only make-believe. But the producers of this film committed crimes against humanity which should be punished rather than rewarded with a box-office bonanza, and any communications media, *The Alternative* included, which becomes party to their depravity smells to high heaven!!

Leon S. Rhodes
Editor, *Bryn Athyn Post*
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

ERRATUM

Due to an unfortunate confusion the copyright of *Army* magazine did not appear with "American Strategy in the Nuclear Age" in our March issue.

—Ed

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To the Editor:

I look forward to each issue of *The Alternative*, and I find in "The Continuing Crisis" the same type of humor that made the early *National Review* ("The Week") so enjoyable. This month lived up to my expectations, but I found myself rolling on the floor as I read your editorial, "Intellectualoids: The Lumpen Intelligentsia."

Having spent some time in the worst breeding ground of them all (Yale Law School) I readily recognize the character type and was thoroughly entertained.

J. Robert Brame, III
Richmond, Virginia

To the Editor:

The Communist leaders of Soviet Russia are outraged by comparisons between Stalinist Russia and Hitlerite Germany made by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. They condemn Solzhenitsyn for informing the free world that the government of Imperial Russia was "liberal" and "loving" toward the people and that Hitlerites were "gracious" and "merciful" both to the Russians and the peoples of Eastern Europe, which the West failed to protect from the Soviet occupation.

It should be strongly emphasized that the same comparisons were made by many American citizens of Eastern European descent who fled from their native countries at the close of the Second World War. Those refugees left their native countries because they considered Communism the curse and pestilence of mankind.

Nevertheless, wide circles of the Eastern "liberal" Establishment ignored the stories of those refugees in spite of the fact that the outrageous crimes against humanity committed by the Russian Communists in the once-independent Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and in the Russian puppet states in Eastern Europe were well-documented by the resolutions passed by Congress. When those Americans of Eastern European descent appealed to the conscience of the free world, they were met with a conspiracy of silence. In many cases those anti-Communists were greeted by the self-styled liberal circles with open hostility. It is an amazing fact that our liberal papers and TV networks, which blame President Richard M. Nixon for covering up the Watergate affair, have studiously refrained themselves from informing the general public about the Communist rule in Eastern Europe.

Therefore, millions of Americans of the Eastern European descent are confronted with the outspoken credibility gap created by liberal papers and TV networks.

Dr. Alexander V. Berkis
Professor of History
Farmville, Virginia

To the Editor:

I read the book review of *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind*, with much interest, and to say that I wasn't the least bit disappointed, is to put it mildly.

I started writing what might be considered a typical conservative reply, quoting paragraph and sentence, I couldn't find any verse, when I suddenly realized the whole book could be answered in two words, three if one wished to wax eloquent. Since I want to make this appear a little impressive, I will make it three:

Khrushchev—England—Solzhenitsyn.

Thanking you for the use of your kilocycles.

Bernard Moser
Fleetwood, Pennsylvania

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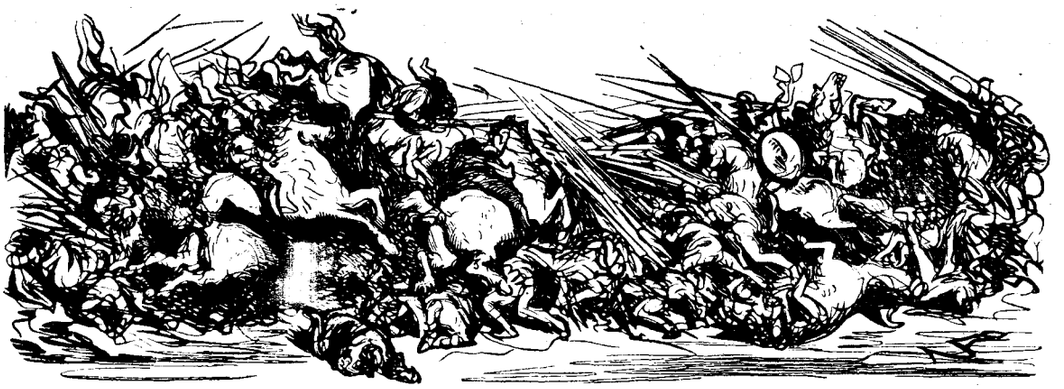

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